This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

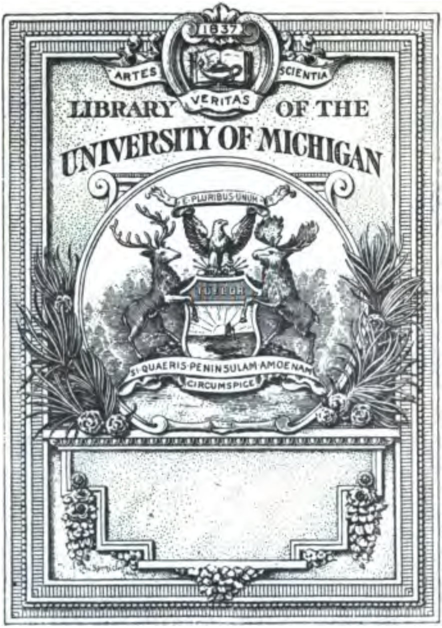
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`


1837
ARTES
SCIENTIA
VERITAS
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
E PLURIBUS UNUM
TUEBOR
SI QUAERIS PENINSULAM AMOENAM
CIRCUMSPICE

BS
195
.M68
B6
1897

The Modern Reader's Bible

Biblical Idyls

Solomon's Song
Ruth
Esther
Tobit

·The
Co·

Bible. O.T. English. Selections. 1897

THE MODERN READER'S BIBLE

A SERIES OF WORKS FROM THE SACRED SCRIPTURES PRESENTED
IN MODERN LITERARY FORM

F 2781

BIBLICAL IDYLS

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

RICHARD G. MOULTON, M.A. (CAMB.), PH.D. (PENN.)
PROFESSOR OF LITERATURE IN ENGLISH IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.
1897

All rights reserved

COPYRIGHT, 1896,
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped July, 1896. Reprinted December, 1896.

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co. – Berwick & Smith
Norwood Mass. U.S.A.

Freeland 5-5-36 M.T.T.

INTRODUCTION

THE word 'Idyl' as a literary term is not easy to define. It first appears in literary history in connection with the late school of Greek poetry represented to modern readers chiefly by Theocritus, and the kind of composition which thus arose when the poetry of Europe, having exhausted its primary impulses, found a new starting point in external nature from the open air shepherd life of Sicily. The Sicilian songs were the source of the long pastoral tradition which has run through Roman and modern literatures; and in association with such arcadian scenes the term 'idyllic' seems especially appropriate. If we go to etymology for light on the word 'idyl,' we are met by a difficulty. It is a diminutive of the Greek word *eidos*, and *eidos* is a 'form' or 'kind' of literature.[1] But what is the force of the diminutive? That it is partly intended to convey the fragmentary and miscellaneous character of the poems is suggested by the application to them of another term — 'eclogues,' Pliny[1] using the words 'idyls' and 'eclogues' as synonymous. Now the word 'eclogues' is the exact Greek equivalent of the English word 'selections,' and is the term used by the Greek for what we should call 'elegant extracts.' But the diminutive term seems also to suggest the homely matter of idyl poetry, the simplicity of theme that contrasts with the grandeur supposed to be proper for the forms of epic, lyric, and dramatic. The use of a diminutive term, and its double suggestiveness, may fairly be paralleled by a modern poet's application of the word 'trifles' to his compositions. It is true that different ages have different ideas as to what is grand and what is trifling. Usage however seems to indicate that idyl poetry treats, not war, nor heroic actions, nor even love as an enthralling passion, but the domestic details of shepherd life, love as a social incident, popular superstitions such as witchcraft. To say then that where the word 'idyl' is used an antithesis is intended between homely and heroic — this is the nearest approach we can make to a definition; and the adjective 'idyllic' will suggest perfection on its side of simplicity. Two modern usages of the term are interesting. Tennyson has made a contribution to Arthurian epic. But as he designed independent episodes rather than a continuous poem, and as he was to mingle the heroic achievements of Arthur and his knights with the treatment of love and domestic relations, he had a double claim to entitle his poem *Idyls of the King*. Again, Wagner has given us in his *Siegfried* a romantic epic of ponderous grandeur. But when he takes the themes of this opera and intermingles them with a traditional cradle song to make a serenade for his wife in honour of their infant child, the exquisite morsel is appropriately named *The Siegfried Idyl.*

---

[1] The commonly received explanation of idyls as 'little pictures' seems to me to have nothing in its favour. It is not clear that *eidos* could mean picture; still less clear that 'little pictures' would be sufficiently descriptive of the poems to constitute a name for them.

---

[1] *Letters* iv. 14.

One point of general importance appears from the above discussion. The term 'idyl' is descriptive of the matter of a poem: as to form it suggests nothing beyond fragmentariness or brevity. As a fact, the idyls of Theocritus must be classified under various headings. Most of them are amœbæan dialogue; in the *Feast of Adonis* the dialogue amounts to a complete dramatic scene, the visit being fully presented from its commencement to its conclusion. The poem on *The Sorceress* is a lyric song with a refrain; Virgil's imitation of it makes a dramatic lyric, since the incantation is carried forward to its success in the return of the lover. The *Hylas* of Theocritus is an epic narrative. Other of his idyls are combinations of more than one literary form: number twenty-two is an epic of Castor and Pollux, breaking into dramatic dialogue in the middle; number eighteen is a bridal song, led up to by the poet's narrative introduction. It appears then that a collection of idyls will embrace poems of varied literary forms, and that a single one of these poems may pass in its course from one form to another. So the present collection of Biblical Idyls includes the lyric idyl of *Solomon's Song*, and the narrative idyls of *Ruth*, *Esther*, and *Tobit*. And the first of these is sufficiently elaborate in its structure to exhibit dramatic epic and lyric in combination.

I

The Song of Songs, commonly known as *Solomon's Song*, is here presented as a lyric idyl. It is of unusual importance to determine the exact technical form of this work, for upon its correct classification will depend, not only lesser details, but the interpretation of the very story which the poem is to convey. And for arriving at the true classification we have to fall back upon general considerations, since there is nothing else in Hebrew literature with which comparison can be made.

The poem is on the face of it dramatic: there is both dialogue, and a story underlying the dialogue. From this fact the majority of commentators have jumped to the conclusion that *Solomon's Song* is a drama: ignoring the possibilities of interpretation that lie in the wide range of the lyric idyl. It must be remembered that lyric poetry is the most elastic medium of literature: a lyric poem may pass to and fro between epic description and dialogue presentation and purely lyric meditation, without at any point ceasing to be lyric. A careful analyst will have noticed this in poetry, and to the most popular mind it is familiar how the chorus of an oratorio may now give forth description, and now take up the personality of parties in the story in order to express their triumph or despair. It is clear then that those who assume the idea of complete drama, and those on the other hand who keep their minds open to the wider possibilities of the lyric idyl, will have very different instruments of interpretation which they can bring to bear upon a given poem. In particular, there are two points of difference between drama and lyric idyl which will be fundamental to interpretation.

In a drama every portion must be spoken by a definite personage of the story (or a group of personages), and in a definite scene. In lyric poetry, even where this is cast in dialogue, the poet may himself break in upon the dialogue with his reflections; or absolute description, not connected with any personal speaker, may come in at any point. The refrains so common in all lyric poetry are usually parenthetic, and so disconnected from the dialogue or narrative at the points at which they occur. In *Deborah's Song* the description —

> Then the people of the LORD went down to the gates —

is interrupted by the performers momentarily apostrophising one another —

Men — Awake, awake, Deborah,
Awake, awake, utter a song: —

Women — Arise, Barak,
And lead thy captivity captive, etc.

In Theocritus we have seen how epic and dramatic may mingle in the same poem. And in the Indian poem so exquisitely translated by Sir Edwin Arnold under the title *The Indian Song of Songs*, besides snatches of narrative, the poet Jayadev is continually breaking in by name to make religious application of points reached in the dialogue of the personages in the story. In analysing the Hebrew poem then we must be prepared to find passages not forming part of the dialogue, but which are the minstrel's refrains breaking up his poem into parts, or pieces of epic description introducing a change of scene.

There is another difference between dramatic and lyric, still more important for its bearing upon interpretation. From the very nature of drama it follows that the details of incident underlying the words of the speeches must follow the order of time. Drama instead of narrating actually presents a story: and hence dramatic action can never go back. The corresponding lyric forms merely meditate upon the incidents, however they may use dramatic dialogue to make the meditation vivid: they can therefore refer to the different parts of the story in any order, passing from the later to the earlier, without any restriction as to order of time. *The Song of Moses and Miriam* commences with the complete triumph of Jehovah over the hosts of Egypt: half the song is over before the incident that is earliest in time appears — the enemy's boastful pursuit. Those then who assume that *Solomon's Song* must be a drama burden themselves with the restriction of making the sequence of details in the poem tally with sequence of time.

It is not surprising that a work of literature should give up different senses to those who bring to bear upon it such different instruments of interpretation. Those who hold that *Solomon's Song* is a drama find the plot of that drama to consist in a struggle between King Solomon and a humble shepherd wooer for the love of the fair Shulammite woman, Solomon in the end giving way, and the heroine and her humble wooer becoming united. To me this result seems to be wrung out of the words of the poem with a good deal of straining. On the other hand, if we allow the work the wider range of lyric idyls, there needs no straining of interpretation to arrive at a story which is certainly not less interesting than the other. For by this interpretation we are able to identify the humble lover with Solomon himself. The story becomes this. King Solomon with a courtly retinue, visiting the royal vineyards upon Mount Lebanon, comes by surprise upon the fair Shulammite. She flies from them. Solomon visits her in the disguise of a shepherd, and so wins her love. He then comes in all his royal state, and calls upon her to leave Lebanon and become his queen. They are in the act of being wedded in the royal palace when the poem opens.

This, which is the story as a whole, is brought out for us in seven idyls, each independent, all founded on the one story, but making their reference to different parts of it as these occur to the minds of the speakers, without the limitation to order of succession that would be implied in dramatic presentation. The first song depicts the Wedding Day: the bride—with her bridesmaids, the 'daughters of Jerusalem'—is approaching the palace, Solomon leading her. Then there is the ceremony of lifting the bride across the threshold. The new queen, elevated to a throne from a country life, apologises gracefully for her homeliness to the company of city-bred bridesmaids. Then there follow confidences between husband and wife; later, the procession is passing from the banqueting hall to the bridal chamber. The wedding day has been presented in its successive moments; and now the minstrel's refrain bids all leave the lovers to their repose.

The second idyl may be said to go back in time, for it takes the form of the Bride's Reminiscences of the Courtship. She describes a visit to her of her lover in the fair spring time, and how in the midst of his sweet words the harsh voices of her brothers broke in upon them, with the cry that the foxes were in the vineyard. Again, after the intervention of a refrain, the bride tells a simple dream of losing her lover and finding him again. Some snatch of refrain here, as always, separates one idyl from another.

From the wedding scene with which we opened we have, in the third idyl, gone back in time to the Day of Betrothal, which is here presented in great particularity. Already the heroine has been won by the lover in his disguise, but now Solomon is to visit the Shulammite in state. The epic description of which I have spoken — or, if the reader prefers, such an impersonal 'chorus' as in oratorio is used to carry on narrative — paints the journey of the king in the sumptuous chariot, with guards because of terrors in the night journey through the wilderness. The dialogue that follows commences with Solomon's ravishment at the charms of his love; he invites her to leave the rugged Lebanon, the actual proposal of marriage being veiled under a symbol of maidenhood — a garden shut up. With the use of the same symbolism the Shulammite speaks her assent; and the poet breaks in with his blessing:

> Eat, O friends,
> Drink, yea, drink abundantly of love.

The next idyl presents again a dream, this time A Troubled Dream of the Bride. Her lover comes in the night season; and while she pauses a moment to adjust her dress, and dip her fingers in the myrrh, she loses him, and wanders forth to find him, being beaten and insulted by the watch. With the fanciful incongruity that is so delightful in dream movement she finds herself, without surprise, accosting the chorus of bridesmaids, and talking of her lover: in the rapturous description of his charms the trouble of the dream passes off like a cloud, and the end is the happy confidence which leads up to the triumphant refrain.

The fifth of these songs is wholly spoken by the royal bridegroom. It is a passionate Meditation on the charms of his Bride. Incidentally it introduces, in an important passage to which I shall recur, the occasion of his first meeting the fair Shulammite.

The two concluding idyls might be called, in modern phrase, the close of the honeymoon. The first of them is spoken by the bride to her husband. Amid all the splendour of the royal palace she finds herself longing for her country home on Lebanon, and appeals to her husband that they may visit it together and renew their love there. The last of the songs carries out this purpose. A morsel of description, so phrased as to read like a brief echo of the longer description in the former song, introduces the pair arriving together from their wilderness journey. The talk that follows in the home scene is just what would be natural. They recognise the very spot where the king and his court came by surprise upon the startled maiden. They speak sweet words of love, and of its foe jealousy. The bride recalls riddling speeches of maidenhood and marriage spoken to her when she was too much of a child to understand them; all is intelligible now. Finally, in a quaint figure, she renews her devotion to her husband: king Solomon has been the 'landlord' of her home, he shall also be the landlord of her heart. But royal personages cannot be left long to such solitary delights; hence the voices of the escort are soon heard: these are a signal for one more embrace, and the poem ends.

Besides this general clue as to the mode in which the different parts of the story are brought before us it is well that, before commencing the text, the reader should have his attention drawn to a few passages which are more or less peculiar in their form. I have already indicated that in places the dialogue gives way to description, or to the poet's apostrophes or refrains. These passages are in the present edition distinguished by italic type. But there are two sections of the poem which stand in need of more explanation.

The first of these occurs in the fifth song. The portions of the song preceding and following this passage are wholly occupied with the king's rapturous meditation on his bride. As part of this meditation he has said:

> There are threescore queens,
> And fourscore concubines,
> And virgins without number:
> My dove, my undefiled, is but one;

[illegible]
[illegible] blessed;
[illegible] and they praised her.

[illegible] well express the words of [illegible] when they came by surprise [illegible]

[illegible] the morning,
[illegible] sun,
[illegible] banners?

[illegible] express the feelings — the un- [illegible] Shulammite as the gaze of the [illegible] upon her:

I went down into the garden of nuts,
To see the green plants of the valley,
To see whether the vine budded,
And the pomegranates were in flower:
Or ever I was aware, my soul set me
Among the chariots of my princely people.

Next comes a couplet, which may or may not have been spoken, conveying the longing of the courtiers to gaze longer upon the beauty who was fleeing from them.

Return, return, O Shulammite,
Return, return, that we may look upon thee.

Another couplet, which again may or may not have been spoken, presents the maiden as uncomfortable under this courtly gaze:

> Why will ye look upon the Shulammite,
> As upon the dance of Mahanaim?

Then the king's meditation continues:

> How beautiful are thy feet in sandals, etc.

We have here, not an actual dialogue between two parties, but the form of dialogue thrown over the succession of feelings of the respective parties as they face one another; and the whole is not part of a dramatic scene occurring at the moment, but a reminiscence. The effect may be styled a dramatised reminiscence.[1]

The same suggestion of dramatised reminiscence covers another passage.

SHE

> Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth,
> Where thou feedest thy flock,
> Where thou makest it to rest at noon:
> For why should I be as one that wandereth
> Beside the flocks of thy companions?

---

[1] It is worth noting that the metrical form of this dramatised reminiscence breaks the metrical uniformity of the idyl as a whole. See below, page 123.

He

If thou know not, O thou fairest among women,
Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

It is from this exchange of speeches more than from anything else that we catch what I have presented above as one of the elements of the story, how that Solomon, after the Shulammite had fled from the approach of the royal party, courted her in the disguise of a shepherd. She naturally wondered who this shepherd could be, so different from all she had known; he, equally naturally, had sought to put off her questionings with vague answers which meant nothing. All this is perfectly natural in a love idyl; the sole difficulty is the place at which this passage occurs. It is found in the first song of the wedding day; what immediately precedes is the address to the bridesmaids, what follows is evidently the procession from the banqueting hall to the bedchamber. It will be admitted that nothing could be more natural than that the first whispered confidence between the royal pair, who have that moment been wedded in a palace, should be a reminiscence of the courtship made under such different surroundings. No one would have felt any difficulty about the passage if the first speech had been introduced with the words — "Do you remember how I asked —," and the second with the words — "And do you remember how I answered —." But it is surely requiring the reader to assume very little when we claim that the reminiscence is not introduced in that formal and prosaic manner, but is dramatically couched in the very words spoken on the former occasion. And it confirms this interpretation of the passage that a similar dramatised reminiscence has been shown to occur in another of the songs, where the context makes the form unmistakable.

In reference to the matter of *Solomon's Song*, it must be pronounced a poem of pure conjugal love. However difficult it may be to us to reconcile the ideas of polygamy and purity, the harmony between these is distinctly a part of the poem.

There are threescore queens,
And fourscore concubines,
And virgins without number:
My dove, my undefiled is but one;
She is the only one of her mother;
She is the pure one of her that bare her;

In various passages of the songs many readers are shocked at the passionate warmth of language, and lack of all reserve, which allows a poet to catalogue the bodily charms of his mistress, and dwell upon each with intensity of expression. It may be admitted that the poet of the Idyls belongs to a more warmly amorous race than his English readers. But such passages as I have in mind rest for their effect, not so much upon points of racial difference, as upon a special characteristic of poetic style of wide application in oriental poetry. I refer to the fact that, whereas modern poetry depends for intensity of effect chiefly upon imagery, oriental poetry combines with imagery the very different device of symbolism.

Both imagery and symbolism rest upon comparison: some external idea is imported to be compared with a detail in the positive description. But imagery appeals to the imagination, and uses ideas which make pictures; symbolism does not appeal to the pictorial sense at all, but rather to some analytic faculty, or conventional association of ideas. Thus with the symbols regularly used in *Solomon's Song* for all that has to do with the sexual relations — the symbol of the vineyard, of the garden shut up and the fountain sealed, the antithesis of the wall for chastity and the door for facility of disposition, the symbolic sport of the roe amongst the lilies or upon the 'mountains of separation': in all these cases there is no realism, but its opposite, conventional substitutes for vivid expressions. Such symbols are as widely removed from realistic images as a telegraph code is removed from onomatopœia.

The principle is not less true in application to the symbols of particular passages: these rest, not on pictorial effect, but on the ingenuity of the comparison, or on reference to standards of value. "His head is as the most fine gold": how little of picture there is in this is seen in the next line which speaks of bushy locks black as a raven. An English poem could not compare the heroine's nose to "the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus": modern realism would seize upon the hugeness of a tower, and turn the effect to the farcical; the less literal imagination of the east is at leisure to catch the suggestion of a stateliness giving centre and direction to a landscape in the way the nose serves as centre and index to the countenance. Similar comment may be made upon the comparison of the eyes to "pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath-rabbim," of cheeks to beds of spices, hands to rings of gold set with beryl, body to ivory work overlaid with sapphires. In all these cases nothing is painted; there is simply a reference to supreme types of excellence. It is readers ignoring such usage who have found fault with the heaven of Milton's poem as being material, with its pearly gates and pavement of gold. These are of course simply supreme symbols hallowed by associations of holy writ; they seem material only to those who read with a defective sense of the symbolic.

Sometimes again such symbols will be used as will suggest a double relation between the things compared: this of itself would be fatal to pictorial effect.

> I am black—but comely . . .
> As the tents of Kedar—as the curtains of Solomon.

When Virgil has to deal with sunburnt beauty he uses vivid expressions:

> He's dark; what then? the hyacinth is black,
> The violet also.

The Hebrew poet has no purpose to call up visions of beauty; but the comparisons he chooses, besides the superficial resemblance, will hint how the bride has been brought from the very outskirts of society to the glory of the palace itself. The following passage would be unnatural in modern poetry.

> I have compared thee, O my love, to a steed in Pharaoh's chariots.
> Thy cheeks are comely with plaits of hair,
> Thy neck with strings of jewels.
> We will make thee plaits of gold
> With studs of silver.

To our literalism it would seem derogatory to see in the bride's braided hair and necklace suggestions of horses' harness; what recommends the comparison to the symbolist is the added suggestion of a wild steed promoted to the chariots of Pharaoh. So in another passage, hair suggests mountain goats only because of the double effect of ordered rows and sloping brows, teeth because of their combined purity and evenness are compared to —

> —a flock of ewes that are newly shorn,
> Which are come up from the washing;
> Whereof every one hath twins,
> And none is bereaved among them.

Lips, for the same double suggestiveness, are likened to a thread of scarlet (uniting curve and colour), the temples call up the comparison of the pomegranate only when they are seen through the veil. Analytic interest prevails in all these passages, and not an appeal to the passions.

Yet another variation of symbolism acts by grouping excellences: the comparison must be made with the group as a whole.

> How much better is thy love than wine!
> And the smell of thine ointments than all manner of spices!
> Thy lips, O my bride, drop as the honeycomb;
> Honey and milk are under thy tongue;
> And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

The mind must not isolate any single sensuous detail, but gather from the whole the complete suggestiveness of the feast, with its wealth of flavour and perfume; this companionship of two has become to the royal lover all that the full revelry of the banquet can give of delight. The effect is of the same order as the wealth of synonyms which the poets of Wisdom literature pour out, in calling Wisdom by the indiscriminate names Understanding, Counsel, Discretion, Subtilty, and many more.

I have gone into some detail on this subject in order to emphasise the general principle how different a poetic atmosphere is created by the poetry in which imagery and that in which symbolism prevails. Imagery rests upon pictorial effects, and stimulates the imagination; symbolism appeals to the analytic sense, while to the imagination it acts rather as a sedative than a stimulus. So far from the poetry of *Solomon's Song* violating reserve, it may be said that symbolism is itself a form of reserve. And thus poetry saturated with symbolism can handle topics which more realistic writing must leave alone: making, in the sonnet of *Ecclesiastes*, a picture of beauty out of the infirmities of old age, and in the present poem allowing the raptures of lovers' privacy to be heard by other ears without offence.

On one other point a word may be said. In this presentation of idyllic love, some readers may ask, what has become of the spiritual interpretation? To dwell upon the religious meaning of the sacred literature is beyond the scope of this work. But I desire to point out that nothing here advanced conflicts with any theological use of the poem. It has been presented as celebrating the love of bride and bridegroom. Now this human relationship has been consecrated in the Old Testament to the relationship between Jehovah and his people, in the New Testament to the relationship between Christ and his Church. Here then is material enough for the theologian. The only way in which such discussion as has been offered above interferes with religious interpretation is when an attempt is made to read spiritual meaning into single verses taken apart from their context. *Solomon's Song* has been the happy hunting ground of those who seek to discover mystic senses in isolated phrases, and a literary distortion has been the result which is perhaps without a parallel elsewhere. May an example be permitted? No one doubts the piety of Quarles. But he had a soul that could never rise above the single text; and one of the texts he has chosen to illustrate is the following.

> By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth;
> I sought him, but I found him not.

Instead of reading on to find these words the beginning of a beautiful dream, Quarles is prepared to find in this fragment a spiritual sense. His hieroglyph represents a female figure, allegorical of the human soul, with a flat candlestick in her hand, turning down the bedclothes, and surprised to find no one inside: on the other side of the bed, hidden from her but visible to the reader, is the figure of the Christ, in the attitude of one who has tumbled out of bed. With spiritual interpretation such as this the literary study of the Bible is in uncompromising antagonism. But it is surely not heresy to lay down the principle: First that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual. First the natural sense of a passage, resting upon grammatical connection and the relation of parts to the whole of a literary work, is to be determined, as in any secular book: then only is it legitimate to enquire as to deeper meanings and theological exegesis. And to some readers it may seem that nothing more spiritual need be desired than the celebration of pure conjugal love.

II

The *Book of Ruth* is the very ideal and type of the Idyl: so delicate in its transparent simplicity that the worst service one can do the story is to comment on it. Suffice it to say, that the warp and woof of the tale is a friendship between two women, and the grand climax up to which all is working is the birth of a baby. Instead of war, of national strife, of political struggle, we have here great harvest festivals, ceremonial transfers of land, family contingencies such as hard times and emigration, marriage, and the strange process by which an extinct family might be restored to the genealogies of Israel: such little things as are great to the little man of every day life. Even in the little there are gradations: in this book are found such minutiæ as attentions shown to a shy stranger girl at the harvest feast, petty contrivances for giving her unfair advantages in the gleaning field; details still more minute — how Ruth pockets the scraps at the feast to bring home to her mother in law, who has been sitting solitary at home while she herself has had the excitement of the harvesting. Trifles like these, fitted into their natural frame the idyl, have kept afloat over some thirty centuries of time ; and this story has done more to enable us to live over again in remote Hebrew antiquity than all the heroic achievements of *Joshua* and *Judges* put together.

III

Very different in tone from this is the *Book of Esther*, which indeed hovers on the boundary line between Idyl and Epic History. When we consider that it depicts a crisis in the fortunes of Israel, which threatened to extirpate the race from the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of Ahasuerus by the cruel vengeance of Haman, it might seem necessary to classify the book as epic, if not as formal history. On the other hand, the instrument of deliverance is a girl, newly raised from her quiet life with her cousin and guardian Mordecai to the throne of an empire. And her course of action is girlish rather than heroic. Esther is no Judith, to devote herself to a bold deed for the salvation of her people. She feels all the tremors of an ordinary woman when suddenly called upon to fill an heroic role.

> Fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night nor day: I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.

The further details of her action are eminently girlish. When the critical moment is passed, and the sceptre is held out to her, she does not invoke vengeance on the foe, but simply asks the unusual boon that the king and Haman and herself may banquet together. Instinct seems to have taught her that against all the power of Haman and the king she must fight with the attraction of her beauty; and by the banquet of the three Esther is bringing to bear upon the royal voluptuary the new force of beauty seen in what might be called domestic attractiveness, so different from the place of woman in the revel such as Vashti had refused, or from the merely sensuous intercourse of a king with the chief favourite of his harem. Moreover, as if to balance these *tête à tête* banquets we have, on the other side of the story, the two family councils of Haman and his wife Zeresh and their friends. Again, the turning point in the narrative is a thing no more heroic than a sleepless night of the king, with its result in the reward of Mordecai and the mortification of Haman. Thus, though the *Book of Esther* contains matter of a double kind—heroic and domestic—yet there is enough of the latter to warrant its inclusion in a selection of Idyls. And the intrinsic interest of this artistically turned story will make it welcome anywhere.

IV

It is in the apocryphal *Book of Tobit* that the Hebrew Idyl reaches its perfection of naive simplicity. The book is a picture of loving family life, and whole-hearted devotion to the simplest type of Hebrew religion and Hebrew wisdom; a story further of marvellous providences, and of angelic ministrations mingling with the common round and daily task.

The story is in its earlier part told in the first person by the father, Tobit, with garrulous simplicity. In his own land Tobit had been faithful to the law when all his tribe were false. In exile he delighted with his abundance to relieve the poor among his brethren; and incurred danger and persecution by burying the bodies of Israelites who fell victims to the cruel tyrants, and mourning over the corpses that had no other mourners to pay them their last rites. Tobit is not ashamed to show appreciation of a good dinner. But from such an untasted meal he springs up one day to bury a strangled Israelite, though this must be done at the cost of uncleanness, and loss of the festive occasion. Instead of this bringing him reward, it proves the beginning of his great misfortunes: for while he is sleeping, as unclean, in the open air, his eyes are blinded by sparrows' dung; and though he goes to the physicians, they help him not. He has to live on the bounty of his nephew; and his wife Anna ekes out their scanty means by spinning for wages.

Now comes a commonplace conjugal quarrel. In the irritation of helplessness Tobit becomes suspicious; he hears the cry of a kid in the house, given to his wife by her employers as a bounty over and above her wages, and accuses her of theft. She loses her temper, and reproaches him with his misfortune: wounding him in his tenderest part, for the taunt implies that his accident has revealed the hypocrisy of his godly life. So do small stories and great run on the same lines: Tobit is exactly in the position of Job, whose ideal patience had withstood all the trials of heaven and the adversary, yet broke down when his friends hinted that misfortune revealed sin. Tobit is crushed, and prays Job's prayer that God would let him die, since life has nothing left when his honour is gone.

Now it happens marvellously that this very day, in the distant city of Ecbatana of Media, another righteous Israelite, kinswoman of Tobit, has incurred the same misfortune of unrighteous reproach. The maiden Sarah was of beauty so surpassing that a fiend loved her, and caused the death of the seven men who successively had been given her for husbands, strangling each as they entered the bridal chamber. This mysterious doom, we must suppose, the maiden had borne with patience. But on this day, when Sarah was scourging her maids, as every

Israelitish mistress believed it a point of wisdom to do, they turned on her, and under the smart of correction spoke wicked words implying that her calamity was her crime. Sarah's first impulse at the cruel suggestion was suicide. But she bethought her how she was an only child, and such a deed would bring down her loved parents with sorrow to the grave. So she also was driven to the prayer of Job, that God would let her die; and thus on the same day these same prayers of Tobit and of Sarah are offered from these distant places. "And the prayer of both was heard before the glory of the great God." The wonder-working Providence is to interpose in the troubles of these widely separated kindred families; and the angel Raphael is to be the providential instrument which is to draw the two together.

Tobit has prayed to die. But death needs solemn preparation: and Tobit, commencing to set his house in order, bethinks him of a pledge of money left by him in a city of Media. He sends for his young son Tobias. First he pours into his ears the conventional father's last counsels to a son; and a wisdom discourse, of great beauty, occupies several paragraphs of the story. Then he gives him the commission to go into Media to collect the pledge. But a guide is necessary; and Tobias seeking a guide encounters the angel, who offers himself under the name of Azarias, a fellow tribesman. There is idyllic irony as the guide is closely scrutinised by Tobit, to see whether he is a trustworthy person, and when the wages are proposed — a drachma a day, with expenses, and something extra if the expedition prospers; again when the father, consoling the weeping mother, says that a good angel shall go with their son.

So "they both went forth to depart, and the young man's dog with them." In that sentence is the quintessence of the idyllic spirit. It is not as if the dog had any function to perform in the journey. It is not recorded that he barked at the great fish, nor howled when the fiend was approaching, nor even sniffed suspiciously at the mysterious 'Azarias.' He is not mentioned again till the return journey, when "they went their way, and the dog went after them." There was nothing for Tobias's dog to do in this famous expedition, but he had to be there all the same. There may be a flaw here in the Hebrew colouring of the story, for the Jews did not use dogs as friendly companions. But to the general reader this dog has made Tobias a real flesh and blood young man for all time.

The journey involves a marvel: a great fish that threatens Tobias, but is finally eaten; and the heart and liver and gall of the fish are, by the angel's advice, preserved for certain sovereign uses hereafter. There is another incident of the travel: the terror of Tobias when, as they approach their destination, the mysterious guide announces his purpose to marry the youth to the notorious Sarah. Tobias urges against the dangerous honour that he is the only son of his parents. But the guide instructs him how to meet the evil spirit with prayer and the fumes of the fish's heart and liver.

> Fear not, for she was prepared for thee from the beginning; and thou shalt save her, and she shall go with thee. And I suppose that thou shalt have children of her.

This produces such a change of feeling in the young man that, when they have arrived, and greetings are passed, and the family likeness has been duly noted, Tobias refuses to eat until the marriage proposal has been made, and the contract signed. In the bridal chamber that night all goes according to the saying of the angel. But outside the parents have their misgivings; and when morning has come the father of Sarah works off the anxiety of waiting by digging a grave, to be prepared for all emergencies. But bride and bridegroom are found unharmed, and the wedding feast is kept up with magnificence for a whole fortnight, the holder of Tobit's pledge being one of the guests.

Meanwhile at home the parents were counting the long days, Tobit consoling his wife with what hopes he could. When at last the son is seen approaching, Anna runs forward to fall weeping on his neck. The blind father seeks to follow, and stumbles; his son catches him, and (by the angel's directions) spirts the wondrous fish's gall on to his eyes. Tobit rubs the smarting eyeballs, and rubs the film away. He breaks out in blessings to God, for he sees his son Tobias. There are general rejoicings, and a second wedding feast has to be celebrated in the bridegroom's home.

But now comes the time when the guide has to be discharged. Father and son lay their heads together, and come to the conclusion that for such signal services nothing less can be offered than the half of Tobias's large dowry. This is communicated to 'Azarias': and then the great revelation comes. It is made with fresh stores of wisdom lore, that terminate in the explanation how all their pious thoughts had been known to God, how a vision had been with them all these months, until the climax is reached: I AM RAPHAEL. They fall on their faces, and when they rise, the angel is gone.

The story is wound up with hymns of praise, with pictures of prosperous old age, of magnificent obsequies both of parents and parents in law, and finally the life of Tobias in Ecbatana, where the pious Israelite of the second generation sees fulfilled his father's great hope,— the destruction of the cruel city Nineveh and vindication of the prophecies of Jonah.

⁂

The text is that of the Revised Version, with marginal alternatives often adopted. For the use of it I express my obligations to the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge. A Reference Table at the end connects the pages of this book with the Chapters and Verses of the Bible and Apocrypha.

The Song of Songs

which is

Solomon's

SOLOMON'S SONG

A SUITE OF SEVEN IDYLS

PAGE
IDYL I: The Wedding Day 5
IDYL II: The Bride's Reminiscences of the Courtship . 13
IDYL III: The Day of Betrothal 19
IDYL IV: The Bride's Troubled Dream 27
IDYL V: The King's Meditation on his Bride . . 33
IDYL VI: The Bride's Longing for her Home on Lebanon 39
IDYL VII: The Renewal of Love in the Vineyard of Lebanon 43

IDYL I

THE WEDDING DAY

Outside the Palace

[*The bridal procession approaches: the Royal Bridegroom leading the Bride, followed by an Attendant Chorus of Daughters of Jerusalem*

THE BRIDE

I

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:
For thy love is better than wine;
Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance;
Thy name is as ointment poured forth:
Therefore do the virgins love thee.

[*A pause is made at the threshold of the Palace*

THE BRIDE (*to the Bridegroom*)

Draw me —

ATTENDANT CHORUS

We will run after thee.

[*The Bridegroom lifts the Bride across the threshold*

THE BRIDE

The king hath brought me into his chambers.

ATTENDANT CHORUS

We will be glad and rejoice in thee,
We will make mention of thy love more than of wine.

THE BRIDE

In uprightness do they love thee.

Inside the Palace

THE BRIDE (*to the Chorus*)

2

I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
As the tents of Kedar,
As the curtains of Solomon.
Look not upon me, because I am swarthy,
Because the sun hath scorched me.
My mother's sons were incensed against me,
They made me keeper of the vineyards;
But mine own vineyard have I not kept!

[*The Bride and Bridegroom whisper Reminiscences of their Courtship: how she sought to penetrate his disguise and he answered mysteriously*

THE BRIDE

Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth,
    Where thou feedest thy flock,
    Where thou makest it to rest at noon:
For why should I be as one that wandereth
    Beside the flocks of thy companions?

THE BRIDEGROOM

If thou know not, O thou fairest among women,
    Go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
    And feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

The Procession from the Banqueting House to the Bridal Chamber

THE BRIDEGROOM

3

I have compared thee, O my love, to a steed in Pharaoh's chariots.
    Thy cheeks are comely with plaits of hair,
    Thy neck with strings of jewels.
We will make thee plaits of gold
    With studs of silver.

THE BRIDE

While the king sat at his table, my spikenard sent forth
its fragrance.
My beloved is unto me as a bundle of myrrh,
That lieth betwixt my breasts.
My beloved is unto me as a cluster of henna-flowers
In the vineyards of En-gedi.

THE BRIDEGROOM

4

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;
Thine eyes are as doves.

THE BRIDE

Behold thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant:
Also our couch is green.
The beams of our house are cedars,
And our rafters are firs.

I am a rose of Sharon,
A lily of the valleys.

THE BRIDEGROOM

As a lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.

THE BRIDE

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
So is my beloved among the sons.

5

I sat down under his shadow with great delight,
And his fruit was sweet to my taste.
He brought me to the banqueting house,
And his banner over me was love.

Stay ye me with raisins, comfort me with apples:
For I am sick of love.
Let his left hand be under my head,
And his right hand embrace me.

⁂

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,
Until it please.

IDYL II

THE BRIDE'S REMINISCENCES OF THE COURTSHIP

The Interrupted Visit

THE BRIDE

6

The voice of my beloved! behold he cometh,
    Leaping upon the mountains,
    Skipping upon the hills.
My beloved is like a roe or a young hart:
    Behold, he standeth behind our wall,
He looketh in at the windows,
He sheweth himself through the lattice.
    My beloved spake, and said unto me:
"Rise up, my love, my fair one,
    And come away.

For, lo, the winter is past,
    The rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth;
    The time of the singing of birds is come,
    And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land;
The fig tree ripeneth her green figs,
    And the vines are in blossom,
    They give forth their fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one,
    And come away.

7

O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock,
    In the covert of the steep place,
Let me see thy countenance,
    Let me hear thy voice;

For sweet is thy voice,
    And thy countenance is comely."

VOICES OF THE BROTHERS (*heard interrupting*)

"Take us the foxes,
"The little foxes that spoil the vineyards;
    "For our vineyards are in blossom."

⁂

My beloved is mine, and I am his:
    He feedeth his flock among the lilies.
Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,
    Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart
    Upon the mountains of separation.

The Happy Dream

8

By night, on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth:
I sought him, but I found him not.
I said, I will rise now, and go about the city,
In the streets and in the broad ways,
I will seek him whom my soul loveth:
I sought him, but I found him not.

The watchmen that go about the city found me:
To whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?
It was but a little that I passed from them,
When I found him whom my soul loveth:
I held him, and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him into my mother's house,
And into the chamber of her that conceived me.

⁂

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,
Until it please.

IDYL III

THE DAY OF BETROTHAL

King Solomon comes in State

9

Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness
Like pillars of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all powders of the merchant?

Behold, it is the litter of Solomon;
Threescore mighty men are about it,
Of the mighty men of Israel.
They all handle the sword, and are expert in war:
Every man hath his sword upon his thigh,
Because of fear in the night.

King Solomon made himself a palanquin
Of the wood of Lebanon.
He made the pillars thereof of silver,
The bottom thereof of gold,
The seat of it of purple,
The midst thereof being inlaid with love from the daughters of Jerusalem.

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon,
With the crown wherewith his mother hath crowned him
In the day of his espousals,
And in the day of the gladness of his heart.

KING SOLOMON

10

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;
Thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil:
Thy hair is as a flock of goats
That lie along the side of Mount Gilead.
Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes that are newly shorn,
Which are come up from the washing;
Whereof every one hath twins,
And none is bereaved among them.

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
And thy mouth is comely.
Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate
Behind thy veil.

Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury,
Whereon there hang a thousand bucklers,
All the shields of the mighty men.
Thy two breasts are like two fawns that are twins of a roe,
Which feed among the lilies.

⁂

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away,
I will get me to the mountain of myrrh,
And to the hill of frankincense.

The Proposal

King Solomon

11

Thou art all fair, my love;
And there is no spot in thee.
Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, with me from Lebanon:
Go from the top of Amana,
From the top of Senir and Hermon,
From the lions' dens,
From the mountains of the leopards.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my bride; thou hast ravished my heart
With one look from thine eyes,
With one chain of thy neck.
How fair is thy love, my sister, my bride!
How much better is thy love than wine!
And the smell of thine ointments than all manner of spices!
Thy lips, O my bride, drop as the honeycomb:
Honey and milk are under thy tongue;
And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.

12

A garden shut up is my sister, my bride;
A spring shut up,
A fountain sealed.
Thy shoots are an orchard of pomegranates,
With precious fruits;
Henna with spikenard plants,
Spikenard and saffron,
Calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense,
Myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.
Thou art a fountain of gardens,
A well of living waters,
And flowing streams from Lebanon.

THE SHULAMMITE

Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south;
Blow upon my garden,
That the spices thereof may flow out.
Let my beloved come into his garden,
And eat his precious fruits.

KING SOLOMON

I am come into my garden, my sister, my bride:
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice;
I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;
I have drunk my wine with my milk.

*

Eat, O friends;
Drink, yea, drink abundantly of love!

IDYL IV

THE BRIDE'S TROUBLED DREAM

13

I was asleep, but my heart waked:
    It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying,
"Open to me,
    My sister, my love,
    My dove, my undefiled:
For my head is filled with dew,
    My locks with the drops of the night."

I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on?
    I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?
My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door,
    And my heart was moved for him.
    I rose up to open to my beloved;
And my hands dropped with myrrh,
And my fingers with liquid myrrh,
    Upon the handles of the bolt.

14

I opened to my beloved;
    But my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone.
My soul had failed me when he spake:
    I sought him, but I could not find him;
    I called him, but he gave me no answer.
The watchmen that go about the city found me,
    They smote me, they wounded me;
    The keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.

[In her Dream she finds herself accosting the
Chorus of Daughters of Jerusalem

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
If ye find my beloved,
That ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

CHORUS (*in the Dream*)

What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
O thou fairest among women?
What is thy beloved more than another beloved,
That thou dost so adjure us?

THE BRIDE (*in the Dream*)

15

My beloved is white and ruddy,
The chiefest among ten thousand.
His head is as the most fine gold,
His locks are bushy, and black as a raven.
His eyes are like doves beside the water brooks;
Washed with milk, and fitly set.
His cheeks are as a bed of spices,
As banks of sweet herbs.

His lips are as lilies, dropping liquid myrrh.
His hands are as rings of gold set with beryl:
His body is as ivory work overlaid with sapphires.

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of
fine gold:
His aspect is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.
His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely.
This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.

CHORUS (*in the Dream*)

16

Whither is thy beloved gone,
O thou fairest among women?
Whither hath thy beloved turned him,
That we may seek him with thee?

THE BRIDE (*in the Dream*)

My beloved is gone down to his garden,
To the beds of spices,
To feed in the gardens,
And to gather lilies.

⁂

I am my beloved's,
And my beloved is mine:
He feedeth his flock among the lilies.

IDYL V

THE KING'S MEDITATION ON HIS BRIDE

THE KING

17

Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,
Comely as Jerusalem,
Terrible as an army with banners.
Turn away thine eyes from me,
For they have overcome me.
Thy hair is as a flock of goats
That lie along the side of Gilead.

Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes,
Which are come up from the washing;
Whereof every one hath twins,
And none is bereaved among them.
Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate
Behind thy veil.

18

There are threescore queens,
And fourscore concubines,
And virgins without number:
My dove, my undefiled, is but one;
She is the only one of her mother;
She is the pure one of her that bare her.
The daughters saw her, and called her blessed;
Yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her: —

SURPRISE OF THE COURT

"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning,
"Fair as the moon, pure as the sun,
"Terrible as an army with banners?"

SURPRISE OF THE SHULAMMITE

"I went down into the garden of nuts,
"To see the green plants of the valley,
"To see whether the vine budded,
"And the pomegranates were in flower.
"Or ever I was aware, my soul set me
"Among the chariots of my princely people."

CRY OF THE COURT

"Return, return, O Shulammite;
"Return, return, that we may look upon thee."

CONFUSION OF THE SHULAMMITE

"Why will ye look upon the Shulammite,
"As upon the dance of Mahanaim?"

THE KING (*continuing his meditation*)

19

How beautiful are thy feet in sandals, O prince's daughter!
The joints of thy thighs are like jewels,
The work of the hands of a cunning workman.
Thy navel is like a round goblet,
Wherein no mingled wine is wanting:
Thy belly is like an heap of wheat
Set about with lilies.

Thy two breasts are like two fawns that are twins of a roe.
Thy neck is like the tower of ivory;
Thine eyes as the pools in Heshbon,
By the gate of Bath-rabbim;
Thy nose is like the tower of Lebanon,
Which looketh toward Damascus.

20

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel,
And the hair of thine head like purple;
The king is held captive in the tresses thereof.
How fair and how pleasant art thou,
O love, for delights!
This thy stature is like to a palm tree,
And thy breasts to clusters of grapes.

I said, I will climb up into the palm tree,
I will take hold of the branches thereof:

Let thy breasts be as clusters of the vine,
    And the smell of thy breath like apples;
And thy mouth like the best wine,
    That goeth down smoothly for my beloved,
    Gliding through the lips of those that are asleep.

⁂

I am my beloved's,
And his desire is toward me.

IDYL VI

THE BRIDE'S LONGING FOR HER HOME ON LEBANON

THE BRIDE

21

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field;
Let us lodge in the villages.
Let us get up early to the vineyards;
Let us see whether the vine hath budded,
And the tender grape appear,
And the pomegranates be in flower:

There will I give thee my love.
The mandrakes give forth fragrance,
And at our doors are all manner of precious fruits,
New and old,
Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

22

Oh, that thou wert as my brother,
That sucked the breasts of my mother!
When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee;
Yea, and none would despise me.

I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother's house,
That thou mightest instruct me.
I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine, of the juice of my pomegranate.

His left hand should be under my head,
And his right hand should embrace me.

⁂

I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
That ye stir not up, nor awaken love,
Until it please.

IDYL VII

THE RENEWAL OF LOVE IN THE VINEYARD OF LEBANON

Reminiscences

23

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness,
Leaning upon her beloved?

*

KING SOLOMON

Under the apple tree I awakened thee:
There thy mother was in travail with thee,
There was she in travail that brought thee forth.

THE BRIDE

24

Set me as a seal upon thine heart,
As a seal upon thine arm:
For love is strong as death;
Jealousy is cruel as the grave:
The flashes thereof are flashes of fire,
A very flame of the LORD.
Many waters cannot quench love,
Neither can the floods drown it:
If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
It would utterly be contemned.

"We have a little sister,
"And she hath no breasts:
"What shall we do for our sister
"In the day when she shall be spoken for?
"If she be a wall,
"We will build upon her a turret of silver:
"And if she be a door,
"We will inclose her with boards of cedar."
I was a wall, and my breasts like the towers thereof:
Then was I in his eyes as one that found peace.

The Renewed Vow

THE BRIDE

25

Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon;
He let out the vineyard unto keepers;
Everyone for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.

My vineyard, which is mine, is before me:
Thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand,
And those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.

[*The escort heard approaching to conduct them back from Lebanon: there is just time for a final embrace*

KING SOLOMON

26

Thou that dwellest in the gardens,
  The companions hearken for thy voice:
  Cause me to hear it.

THE BRIDE

Make haste, my beloved,
  And be thou like to a roe or to a young hart
  Upon the mountains of spices.

The Book of Ruth

I

And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Beth-lehem-Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-Judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; and the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died both of them; and the woman was left of her two children and of her husband.

Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread. And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters; why will ye go with me? have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should even have an husband to-night, and should also bear sons; would ye therefore tarry till they were grown? would ye therefore stay from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes, for the hand of the LORD is gone forth against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people and unto her god: return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said,

Intreat me not to leave thee,
  And to return from following after thee:
For whither thou goest, I will go;
  And where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
Thy people shall be my people,
  And thy God my God;
Where thou diest, will I die,
  And there will I be buried:
The LORD do so to me,
And more also,
  If aught but death part thee and me.

And when she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, she left speaking unto her.

So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem. And it came to pass when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them. And the women said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

2

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean among the ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on the portion of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-lehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: and she said, Let me glean, I pray you, and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, save that she tarried a little in the house. Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither pass from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thy sight, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge. Then she said, Let me find grace in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken kindly unto thine handmaid, though I be not as one of thine handmaidens. And at meal-time Boaz said unto her, Come hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and they reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left thereof. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not. And also pull out some for her from the bundles, and leave it, and let her glean, and rebuke her not. So she gleaned in the field until even; and she beat out that she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth and gave to her that she had left after she was sufficed. And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is nigh of kin unto us, one of our near kinsmen. And Ruth the Moabitess said, Yea, he said unto me, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, and that they meet thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother in law.

And Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now is there not Boaz our kinsman, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the threshing-floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. And she said unto her, All that thou sayest I will do.

And she went down unto the threshing-floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was startled, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman. And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou sayest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am a near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth: lie down until the morning. And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could discern another. For he said, Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing-floor. And he said, Bring the mantle that is upon thee, and hold it; and she held it: and he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and he went into the city. And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said, Go not empty unto thy mother in law. Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

3

Now Boaz went up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the near kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. And he said unto the near kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth the parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: and I thought to disclose it unto thee, saying, Buy it before them that sit here, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. And the near kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: take thou my right of redemption on thee; for I cannot redeem it.

Now this was the custom in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning exchanging, for to confirm all things; a man drew off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was the manner of attestation in Israel. So the near kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thyself. And he drew off his shoe. And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses.

The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house
  Like Rachel and like Leah,
  Which two did build the house of Israel:
And do thou worthily in Ephrathah,
  And be famous in Bethlehem:
And let thy house be like the house of Perez,
Whom Tamar bare unto Judah,
  Of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman.

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in unto her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. And the women said unto Naomi,

Blessed be the Lord,
    Which hath not left thee this day without a near kinsman,
    And let his name be famous in Israel.
And he shall be unto thee a restorer of life,
    And a nourisher of thine old age:
For thy daughter in law, which loveth thee,
Which is better to thee than seven sons,
    Hath borne him.

And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

The Generations of Perez

Perez begat Hezron
    And Hezron begat Ram
        And Ram begat Amminadab
And Amminadab begat Nahshon
    And Nahshon begat Salmon
        And Salmon begat Boaz
And Boaz begat Obed
    And Obed begat Jesse
        And Jesse begat David

The Book of Esther

I

Now it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus, (this is Ahasuerus which reigned, from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces:) that in those days, when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom, which was in Shushan the palace, in the third year of his reign, he made a feast unto all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, being before him: when he shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty many days, even an hundred and fourscore days. And when these days were fulfilled, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace, both great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace; there were hangings of white cloth, of green, and of blue, fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: the couches were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and white, and yellow, and black marble. And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and royal wine in abundance, according to the bounty of the king. And the drinking was according to the law; none could compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure. Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house which belonged to king Ahasuerus.

On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven chamberlains that ministered in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, to bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal, to shew the peoples and the princes her beauty: for she was fair to look on. But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment by the chamberlains: therefore was the king very wroth, and his anger burned in him. Then the king said to the wise men, which knew the times,[1] What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not done the bidding of the king Ahasuerus by the chamberlains? And Memucan answered before the king and the princes:

"Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the peoples that are in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. For this deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, to make their husbands contemptible in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. And this day shall the princesses of Persia and Media which have heard of the deed of the queen say the like unto all the king's princes. So shall there arise much contempt and wrath. If it please the king, let there go forth a royal commandment from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, that it be not altered, that Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she. And when the king's decree which he shall make shall be published throughout all his kingdom, (for it is great,) all the wives shall give to their husbands honour, both to great and small."

---

[1] For so was the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgement; and the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the seven princes of Persia and Media, which saw the king's face, and sat first in the kingdom.

And the saying pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan: for he sent letters into all the king's provinces, into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should bear rule in his own house, and should publish it according to the language of his people.

After these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was pacified, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her. Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king: and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, unto the custody of Hegai the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their things for purification be given them: and let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so.

There was a certain Jew in Shushan the palace, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite; who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther, his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maiden was fair and beautiful; and when her father and mother were dead, Mordecai took her for his own daughter. So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was taken into the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with her portions, and the seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he removed her and her maidens to the best place of the house of the women. Esther had not shewed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she should not shew it. And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her.

Now when the turn of every maiden was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that it had been done to her according to the law for the women, twelve months,[1] then in this wise came the maiden unto the king, whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king delighted in her, and that she were called by name. Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favour in his sight more than all the virgins; so that he set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the bounty of the king.

---

[1] For so were the days of their purifications accomplished, to wit, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with the things for the purifying of the women.

And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat in the king's gate. Esther had not yet shewed her kindred nor her people; as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him. In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus. And the thing was known to Mordecai, who shewed it unto Esther the queen; and Esther told the king thereof in Mordecai's name. And when inquisition was made of the matter, and it was found to be so, they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in the book of the chronicles before the king.

2

After these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and advanced him and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed down, and did reverence to Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not down, nor did him reverence. Then the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the king's commandment? Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew. And when Haman saw that Mordecai bowed not down, nor did him reverence, then was Haman full of wrath. But he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had shewed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai.

In the first month, which is the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, they cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month to month, to the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from those of every people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they be destroyed: and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those that have the charge of the king's business, to bring it into the king's treasuries. And the king took his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.

Then were the king's scribes called in the first month, on the thirteenth day thereof, and there was written according to all that Haman commanded unto the king's satraps, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the princes of every people; to every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and it was sealed with the king's ring. And letters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. A copy of the writing, that the decree should be given out in every province, was published unto all the peoples, that they should be ready against that day. The posts went forth in haste by the king's commandment, and the decree was given out in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Shushan was perplexed.

3

Now when Mordecai knew all that was done, Mordecai rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry: and he came even before the king's gate: for none might enter within the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes. And Esther's maidens and her chamberlains came and told it her; and the queen was exceedingly grieved: and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take his sackcloth from off him: but he received it not. Then called Esther for Hathach, one of the king's chamberlains, whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and charged him to go to Mordecai, to know what this was, and why it was. So Hathach went forth to Mordecai unto the broad place of the city, which was before the king's gate. And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and the exact sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given out in Shushan to destroy them, to shew it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her; and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him, for her people. And Hathach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. Then Esther spake unto Hathach, and gave him a message unto Mordecai, saying: All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law for him, that he be put to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. And they told to Mordecai Esther's words. Then Mordecai bade them return answer unto Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house shall perish. And who knoweth whether thou art not come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Then Esther bade them return answer unto Mordecai, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the entrance of the house. And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre. Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be given thee even to the half of the kingdom. And Esther said, If it seem good unto the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him. Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that it may be done as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed. Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request is; if I have found favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to-morrow as the king hath said.

Then went Haman forth that day joyful and glad of heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, that he stood not up nor moved for him, he was filled with wrath against Mordecai. Nevertheless Haman refrained himself, and went home; and he sent and fetched his friends and Zeresh his wife. And Haman recounted unto them the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow also am I invited by her together with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made.

4

On that night could not the king sleep; and he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles, and they were read before the king. And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, of those that kept the door, who had sought to lay hands on the king Ahasuerus. And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him. And the king said, Who is in the court? Now Haman was come into the outward court of the king's house, to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him. And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in. So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman said in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself? And Haman said unto the king, For the man whom the king delighteth to honour, let royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and on the head of which a crown royal is set: and let the apparel and the horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and cause him to ride on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour. Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.

Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and caused him to ride through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour. And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman hasted to his house, mourning and having his head covered. And Haman recounted unto Zeresh his wife and all his friends every thing that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai, before whom thou hast begun to fall, be of the seed of the Jews, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him. While they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared.

5

So the king and Haman came to banquet with Esther the queen. And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed. Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my peace, although the adversary could not have compensated for the king's damage. Then spake the king Ahasuerus and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, An adversary and an enemy, even this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen. And the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen: for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon the couch whereon Esther was. Then said the king, Will he even force the queen before me in the house? As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. Then said Harbonah, one of the chamberlains that were before the king, Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman hath made for Mordecai, who spake good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. And the king said, Hang him thereon. So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

6

On that day did the king Ahasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told what he was unto her. And the king took off his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai.

And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. And Esther spake yet again before the king, and fell down at his feet, and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews. Then the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre. So Esther arose, and stood before the king. And she said, If it please the king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing seem right before the king, and I be pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to destroy the Jews which are in all the king's provinces: for how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred? Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews. Write ye also to the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.

Then were the king's scribes called at that time, in the third month, which is the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth day thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the satraps, and the governors and princes of the provinces which are from India unto Ethiopia, an hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. And he wrote in the name of king Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, riding on swift steeds that were used in the king's service, bred of the stud: wherein the king granted the Jews which were in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, their little ones and women, and to take the spoil of them for a prey, upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar. A copy of the writing, that the decree should be given out in every province, was published unto all the peoples, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies.

So the posts that rode upon swift steeds that were used in the king's service went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment; and the decree was given out in Shushan the palace. And Mordecai went forth from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a robe of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan shouted and was glad. The Jews had light and gladness, and joy and honour. And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had gladness and joy, a feast and a good day. And many from among the peoples of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews was fallen upon them.

Now in the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have rule over them; whereas it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them; the Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them was fallen upon all the peoples. And all the princes of the provinces, and the satraps, and the governors, and they that did the king's business, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai was fallen upon them. For Mordecai was great in the king's house, and his fame went forth throughout all the provinces: for the man Mordecai waxed greater and greater. And the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and with slaughter and destruction, and did what they would unto them that hated them. And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men. And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, and Poratha, and

Adalia, and Aridatha, and Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vaizatha, the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Jews' enemy, slew they; but on the spoil they laid not their hand.

On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace was brought before the king. And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what then have they done in the rest of the king's provinces! Now what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what is thy request further? and it shall be done. Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which are in Shushan to do to-morrow also according unto this day's decree, and let Haman's ten sons be hanged upon the gallows. And the king commanded it so to be done: and a decree was given out in Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons. And the Jews that were in Shushan gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men in Shushan; but on the spoil they laid not their hand. And the other Jews that were in the king's provinces gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of them that hated them seventy and five thousand; but on the spoil they laid not their hand.

7

This was done on the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and on the fourteenth day of the same they rested, and make it a day of feasting and gladness. But the Jews that were in Shushan assembled together on the thirteenth day thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth day of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. Therefore do the Jews of the villages, that dwell in the unwalled towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day, and of sending portions one to another.

And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that were in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, both nigh and far, to enjoin them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly, as the days wherein the Jews had rest from their enemies, and the month which was turned unto them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor. And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them; because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to consume them, and to destroy them; but when the matter came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he had devised against the Jews, should return upon his own head; and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. Wherefore they called these days Purim, after the name of Pur. Therefore because of all the words of this letter, and of that which they had seen concerning this matter, and that which had come unto them, the Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as joined themselves unto them, so as it should not fail, that they would keep these two days according to the writing thereof, and according to the appointed time thereof, every year; and that these days should be remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed. Then Esther the queen, the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with all authority to confirm this second letter of Purim. And he sent letters unto all the Jews, to the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, with words of peace and truth, to confirm these days of Purim in their appointed times, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had enjoined them, and as they had ordained for themselves and for their seed, in the matter of the fastings and their cry. And the commandment of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land,

and upon the isles of the sea. And all the acts of his power and of his might, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai, whereunto the king advanced him, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews, and accepted of the multitude of his brethren; seeking the good of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

The Book of the Words

of

TOBIT

the son of Tobiel

the son of Ananiel, the son of Aduel
the son of Gabael, of the seed of Asiel
of the Tribe of Naphtali

Who in the days of Enemessar king of the
Assyrians was carried away captive out of

Thisbe

which is on the right hand of Kedesh Naphtali
in Galilee
above Asher

1

I Tobit walked in the ways of truth and righteousness all the days of my life, and I did many almsdeeds to my brethren and my nation, who went with me into the land of the Assyrians, to Nineveh. And when I was in mine own country, in the land of Israel, while I was yet young, all the tribe of Naphtali my father fell away from the house of Jerusalem (which was chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, that all the tribes should sacrifice there, and the temple of the habitation of the Most High was hallowed and built therein for all ages), and all the tribes which fell away together sacrificed to the heifer Baal, and so did the house of Naphtali my father, and I alone went often to Jerusalem at the feasts, as it hath been ordained unto all Israel by an everlasting decree, having the firstfruits and the tenths of mine increase, and that which was first shorn; and I gave them at the altar to the priests the sons of Aaron. The tenth part of all mine increase I gave to the sons of Levi, who ministered at Jerusalem: and the second tenth part I sold away, and went, and spent it each year at Jerusalem: and the third I gave unto them to whom it was meet, as Deborah my father's mother had commanded me, because I was left an orphan by my father. And when I became a man, I took to wife Anna of the seed of our own family, and of her I begat Tobias.

And when I was carried away captive to Nineveh, all my brethren and those that were of my kindred did eat of the bread of the Gentiles: but I kept myself from eating, because I remembered God with all my soul.

And the Most High gave me grace and favour in the sight of Enemessar, and I was his purveyor. And I went into Media, and left in trust with Gabael, the brother of Gabrias, at Rages of Media, ten talents of silver. And when Enemessar was dead, Sennacherib his son reigned in his stead; and in his time the highways were troubled, and I could no more go into Media. And in the days of Enemessar I did many almsdeeds to my brethren: I gave my bread to the hungry, and my garments to the naked: and if I saw any of my race dead, and cast forth on the wall of Nineveh, I buried him. And if Sennacherib the king slew any, when he came fleeing from Judæa, I buried them privily; for in his wrath he slew many; and the bodies were sought for by the king, and were not found. But one of the Ninevites went and shewed to the king concerning me, how that I buried them, and hid myself; and when I knew that I was sought for to be put to death, I withdrew myself for fear. And all my goods were forcibly taken away, and there was nothing left unto me, save my wife Anna and my son Tobias. And there passed not five and fifty days, before two of his sons slew him, and they fled into the mountains of Ararat. And Sarchedonus his son reigned in his stead; and he appointed over all the accounts of his kingdom, and over all his affairs, Achiacharus my brother Anael's son. And Achiacharus made request for me, and I came to Nineveh. Now Achiacharus was cupbearer, and keeper of the signet, and steward, and overseer of the accounts: and Sarchedonus appointed him next unto himself: but he was my brother's son.

2

Now when I was come home again, and my wife Anna was restored unto me, and my son Tobias, in the feast of Pentecost, which is the holy feast of the seven weeks, there was a good dinner prepared me, and I sat down to eat. And I saw abundance of meat, and I said to my son, Go and bring what poor man soever thou shalt find of our brethren, who is mindful of the Lord; and, lo, I tarry for thee. And he came, and said, Father, one of our race is strangled, and is cast out in the marketplace. And before I had tasted aught, I sprang up, and took him up into a chamber until the sun was set. And I returned, and washed myself, and ate my bread in heaviness, and remembered the prophecy of Amos, as he said,

Your feasts shall be turned into mourning,
And all your mirth into lamentation.

And I wept; and when the sun was set, I went and made a grave, and buried him. And my neighbours mocked me, and said, He is no longer afraid to be put to death for this matter: and yet he fled away: and, lo, he burieth the dead again. And the same night I returned from burying him, and slept by the wall of my courtyard, being polluted; and my face was uncovered: and I knew not that there were sparrows in the wall; and, mine eyes being open, the sparrows muted warm dung into mine eyes, and white films came in mine eyes; and I went to the physicians, and they helped me not: but Achiacharus did nourish me, until he went into Elymais.

And my wife Anna did spin in the women's chambers, and did send the work back to the owners. And they on their part paid her wages, and gave her also besides a kid. But when it came to my house, it began to cry, and I said unto her, From whence is this kid? is it stolen? render it to the owners; for it is not lawful to eat anything that is stolen. But she said, It hath been given me for a gift more than the wages. And I did not believe her, and I bade her render it to the owners; and I was abashed at her. But she answered and said unto me, Where are thine alms and thy righteous deeds? behold, thou and all thy works are known.

And I was grieved and wept, and prayed in sorrow, saying:

"O Lord, thou art righteous, and all thy works and all thy ways are mercy and truth, and thou judgest true and righteous judgement for ever. Remember me, and look on me; take not vengeance on me for my sins and mine ignorances, and the sins of my fathers, which sinned before thee: for they disobeyed thy commandments; and thou gavest us for a spoil, and for captivity, and for death, and for a proverb of reproach to all the nations among whom we are dispersed. And now many are thy judgements, true are they; that thou shouldst deal with me according to my sins and the sins of my fathers: because we did not keep thy commandments, for we walked not in truth before thee. And now deal with me according to that which is pleasing in thy sight, command my spirit to be taken from me, that I may be released, and become earth: for it is profitable for me to die rather than to live, because I have heard false reproaches, and there is much sorrow in me: command that I be now released from my distress, and go to the everlasting place: turn not thy face away from me."

The same day it happened unto Sarah the daughter of Raguel in Ecbatana of Media, that she also was reproached by her father's maidservants; because that she had been given to seven husbands, and Asmodæus the evil spirit slew them, before they had lain with her. And they said unto her, Dost thou not know that thou stranglest thy husbands? thou hast had already seven husbands, and thou hast had no profit of any one of them. Wherefore dost thou scourge us? if they be dead, go thy ways with them; let us never see of thee either son or daughter. When she heard these things, she was grieved exceedingly, so that she thought to have hanged herself: and she said, I am the only daughter of my father; if I do this, it shall be a reproach unto him, and I shall bring down his old age with sorrow to the grave. And she prayed by the window, and said, "Blessed art thou, O Lord my God, and blessed is thy holy and honourable name for ever: let all thy works praise thee for ever. And now, Lord, I have set mine eyes and my face toward thee: command that I be released from the earth, and that I no more hear reproach. Thou knowest, Lord, that I am pure from all sin with man, and that I never polluted my name, nor the name of my father, in the land of my captivity: I am the only daughter of my father, and he hath no child that shall be his heir, nor brother near him, nor son belonging to him, that I should keep myself for a wife unto him: seven husbands of mine are dead already; why should I live? And if it pleaseth thee not to slay me, command some regard to be had of me, and pity taken of me, and that I hear no more reproach."

And the prayer of both was heard before the glory of the great God. Raphael also was sent to heal them both, to scale away the white films from Tobit's eyes, and to give Sarah the daughter of Raguel for a wife to Tobias the son of Tobit; and to bind Asmodæus the evil spirit; because it belonged to Tobias that he should inherit her. The selfsame time did Tobit return and enter into his house, and Sarah the daughter of Raguel came down from her upper chamber.

3

In that day Tobit remembered concerning the money which he had left in trust with Gabael in Rages of Media, and he said in himself, I have asked for death; why do I not call my son Tobias, that I may shew to him of the money before I die? And he called him and said:

"My child, when I die, bury me: and despise not thy mother; honour her all the days of thy life, and do that which is pleasing unto her, and grieve her not. Remember, my child, that she hath seen many dangers for thee, when thou wast in her womb. When she is dead, bury her by me in one grave. My child, be mindful of the Lord our God all thy days, and let not thy will be set to sin and to transgress his commandments: do righteousness all the days of thy life, and follow not the ways of unrighteousness. For if thou doest the truth, thy doings shall prosperously succeed to thee, and to all them that do righteousness.

"Give alms of thy substance; and when thou givest alms, let not thine eye be envious: turn not away thy face from any poor man, and the face of God shall not be turned away from thee. As thy substance is, give alms of it according to thine abundance: if thou have little, be not afraid to give alms according to that little: for thou layest up a good treasure for thyself against the day of necessity: because alms delivereth from death, and suffereth not to come into darkness. Alms is a good gift in the sight of the Most High for all that give it.

"Beware, my child, of all whoredom, and take first a wife of the seed of thy fathers, and take not a strange wife, which is not of thy father's tribe: for we are the sons of the prophets. Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, our fathers of old time, remember, my child, that they all took wives of their brethren, and were blessed in their children, and their seed shall inherit the land. And now, my child, love thy brethren, and scorn not in thy heart thy brethren, and the sons and the daughters of thy people, to take a wife of them: for in scornfulness is destruction and much trouble, and in naughtiness is decay and great want: for naughtiness is the mother of famine.

"Let not the wages of any man, which shall work for thee, tarry with thee, but render it unto him out of hand: and if thou serve God, recompense shall be made unto thee. Take heed to thyself, my child, in all thy works, and be discreet in all thy behaviour. And what thou thyself hatest, do to no man.

"Drink not wine unto drunkenness, and let not drunkenness go with thee on thy way. Give of thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that are naked: of all thine abundance give alms; and let not thine eye be envious when thou givest alms. Pour out thy bread on the burial of the just, and give nothing to sinners.

"Ask counsel of every man that is wise, and despise not any counsel that is profitable. And bless the Lord thy God at all times, and ask of him that thy ways may be made straight, and that all thy paths and counsels may prosper: for every nation hath not counsel; but the Lord himself giveth all good things, and he humbleth whom he will, as he will. And now, my child, remember my commandments, and let them not be blotted out of thy mind.

"And now I shew thee of the ten talents of silver, which I left in trust with Gabael the son of Gabrias at Rages of Media. And fear not, my child, because we are made poor: thou hast much wealth, if thou fear God, and depart from all sin, and do that which is pleasing in his sight."

And Tobias answered and said unto him, Father, I will do all things, whatsoever thou hast commanded me: but how shall I be able to receive the money, seeing I know him not? And he gave him the handwriting, and said unto him, Seek thee a man which shall go with thee, and I will give him wages, whiles I yet live: and go and receive the money. And he went to seek a man, and found Raphael which was an angel; and he knew it not; and he said unto him, Can I go with thee to Rages of Media? and knowest thou the places well? And the angel said unto him, I will go with thee, and I know the way well: and I have lodged with our brother Gabael. And Tobias said unto him, Wait for me, and I will tell my father.

And he said unto him, Go, and tarry not. And he went in and said to his father, Behold, I have found one which will go with me. But he said, Call him unto me, that I may know of what tribe he is, and whether he be a trusty man to go with thee.

And he called him, and he came in, and they saluted one another. And Tobit said unto him, Brother, of what tribe and of what family art thou? Shew me. And he said unto him, Seekest thou a tribe and a family, or a hired man which shall go with thy son? And Tobit said unto him, I would know, brother, thy kindred and thy name. And he said, I am Azarias, the son of Ananias the great, of thy brethren. And he said unto him, Welcome, brother; and be not angry with me, because I sought to know thy tribe and family: and thou art my brother, of an honest and good lineage: for I knew Ananias and Jathan, the sons of Shemaiah the great, when we went together to Jerusalem to worship, and offered the firstborn, and the tenths of our increase; and they went not astray in the error of our brethren: my brother, thou art of a great stock. But tell me, what wages shall I give thee? a drachma a day, and those things that be necessary for thee, as unto my son? And moreover, if ye return safe and sound, I will add something to thy wages. And so they consented. And he said to Tobias, Prepare thyself for the journey, and God prosper you. And his son prepared what was needful for the journey, and his father said unto him, Go thou with this man; but God, which dwelleth in heaven, shall prosper your journey; and may his angel go with you. And they both went forth to depart, and the young man's dog with them.

But Anna his mother wept, and said to Tobit, Why hast thou sent away our child? is he not the staff of our hand, in going in and out before us? Be not greedy to add money to money: but let it be as refuse in respect of our child. For as the Lord hath given us to live, so doth it suffice us. And Tobit said to her, Take no care, my sister; he shall return safe and sound, and thine eyes shall see him. For a good angel shall go with him, and his journey shall be prospered, and he shall return safe and sound. And she made an end of weeping.

4

Now as they went on their journey, they came at eventide to the river Tigris, and they lodged there. But the young man went down to wash himself, and a fish leaped out of the river, and would have swallowed up the young man. But the angel said unto him, Take hold on the fish. And the young man caught hold of the fish, and cast it up on the land. And the angel said unto him, Cut the fish open, and take the heart and the liver and the gall, and put them up safely. And the young man did as the angel commanded him; but they roasted the fish, and ate it. And they both went on their way, till they drew near to

Ecbatana. And the young man said to the angel, Brother Azarias, to what use is the heart and the liver and the gall of the fish? And he said unto him, Touching the heart and the liver, if a devil or an evil spirit trouble any, we must make a smoke thereof before the man or the woman, and the party shall be no more vexed. But as for the gall, it is good to anoint a man that hath white films in his eyes, and he shall be healed.

But when they drew nigh unto Rages, the angel said to the young man, Brother, to-day we shall lodge with Raguel, and he is thy kinsman; and he hath an only daughter, named Sarah. I will speak for her, that she should be given thee for a wife. For to thee doth the inheritance of her appertain, and thou only art of her kindred: and the maid is fair and wise. And now hear me, and I will speak to her father; and when we return from Rages we will celebrate the marriage: for I know that Raguel may in no wise marry her to another according to the law of Moses, or else he shall be liable to death, because it appertaineth unto thee to take the inheritance, rather than any other. Then the young man said unto the angel, Brother Azarias, I have heard that this maid hath been given to seven men, and that they all perished in the bride-chamber. And now I am the only son of my father, and I am afraid, lest I go in and die, even as those before me: for a devil loveth her, which hurteth no man, but those which come unto her: and now I fear lest I die, and bring my father's and my mother's life to the grave with sorrow because of me: and they have no other son to bury them. But the angel said unto him, Dost thou not remember the words which thy father commanded thee, that thou shouldest take a wife of thine own kindred? and now hear me, brother; for she shall be thy wife; and make thou no reckoning of the devil: for this night shall she be given thee to wife. And when thou shalt come into the bride-chamber, thou shalt take the ashes of incense, and shalt lay upon them some of the heart and liver of the fish, and shalt make a smoke therewith: and the devil shall smell it, and flee away, and never come again any more. But when thou goest nigh unto her, rise up both of you, and cry to God which is merciful, and he shall save you, and have mercy on you. Fear not, for she was prepared for thee from the beginning; and thou shalt save her, and she shall go with thee. And I suppose that thou shalt have children of her. And when Tobias heard these things, he loved her, and his soul clave to her exceedingly.

And they came to Ecbatana, and arrived at the house of Raguel. But Sarah met them; and she saluted them, and they her; and she brought them into the house. And he said to Edna his wife, How like is the young man to Tobit my cousin. And Raguel asked them, From whence are ye, brethren? And they said unto him, We are of the sons of Naphtali, which are captives in Nineveh. And he said unto them, Know ye Tobit our brother? But they said, We know him. And he said unto them, Is he in good health? But they said, He is both alive, and in good health: and Tobias said, He is my father. And Raguel sprang up, and kissed him, and wept, and blessed him, and said unto him, Thou art the son of an honest and good man. And when he had heard that Tobit had lost his sight, he was grieved, and wept; and Edna his wife and Sarah his daughter wept. And they received them gladly; and they killed a ram of the flock, and set store of meat before them.

But Tobias said to Raphael, Brother Azarias, speak of those things of which thou didst talk in the way, and let the matter be finished. And he communicated the thing to Raguel: and Raguel said to Tobias, Eat and drink, and make merry: for it appertaineth unto thee to take my child. Howbeit I will shew thee the truth. I have given my child to seven men, and whensoever they came in unto her, they died in the night. But for the present be merry. And Tobias said, I will taste nothing here, until ye make covenant and enter into covenant with me. And Raguel said, Take her to thyself from henceforth according to the manner: thou art her brother, and she is thine: but the merciful God shall give all good success to you. And he called his daughter Sarah, and took her by the hand, and gave her to be wife to Tobias, and said, Behold, take her to thyself after the law of Moses, and lead her away to thy father. And he blessed them; and he called Edna his wife, and took a book, and wrote an instrument, and sealed it. And they began to eat.

And Raguel called his wife Edna, and said unto her, Sister, prepare the other chamber, and bring her in thither. And she did as he bade her, and brought her in thither: and she wept, and she received the tears of her daughter, and said unto her, Be of good comfort, my child; the Lord of heaven and earth give thee favour for this thy sorrow: be of good comfort, my daughter.

And when they had finished their supper, they brought Tobias in unto her. But as he went, he remembered the words of Raphael, and took the ashes of the incense, and put the heart and the liver of the fish thereupon, and made a smoke therewith. But when the devil smelled the smell, he fled into the uppermost parts of Egypt, and the angel bound him. But after they were both shut in together, Tobias rose up from the bed, and said, Sister, arise, and let us pray that the Lord may have mercy on us. And Tobias began to say,

"Blessed art thou, O God of our fathers, and blessed is thy holy and glorious name for ever; let the heavens bless thee, and all thy creatures. Thou madest Adam, and gavest him Eve his wife for a helper and a stay: of them came the seed of men: thou didst say, It is not good that the man should be alone; let us make him a helper like unto him. And now, O Lord, I take not this my sister for lust, but in truth: command that I may find mercy and grow old with her." And she said with him, Amen. And they slept both that night.

And Raguel arose, and went and digged a grave, saying, Lest he also should die. And Raguel came into his house, and said to Edna his wife, Send one of the maidservants, and let them see whether he be alive: but if not, that we may bury him, and no man know it. So the maidservant opened the door, and went in, and found them both sleeping, and came forth and told them that he was alive. And Raguel blessed God, saying:

"Blessed art thou, O God, with all pure and holy blessing; and let thy saints bless thee, and all thy creatures; and let all thine angels and thine elect bless thee for ever. Blessed art thou, because thou hast made me glad; and it hath not befallen me as I suspected; but thou hast dealt with us according to thy great mercy. Blessed art thou, because thou hast had mercy on two that were the only begotten children of their parents: shew them mercy, O Lord; accomplish their life in health with gladness and mercy."

But he commanded his servants to fill the grave. And he kept the wedding feast for them fourteen days. And before the days of the wedding feast were finished, Raguel sware unto him, that he should not depart till the fourteen days of the wedding feast were fulfilled; and that then he should take the half of his goods, and go in safety to his father; and the rest, said he, when I and my wife shall die.

And Tobias called Raphael, and said unto him, Brother Azarias, take with thee a servant, and two camels, and go to Rages of Media to Gabael, and receive the money for me, and bring him to the wedding feast: because Raguel hath sworn that I shall not depart; and my father counteth the days; and if I tarry long, he will be sorely grieved. And Raphael went on his way, and lodged with Gabael, and gave him the handwriting: but he brought forth the bags with their seals, and gave them to him. And they rose up early in the morning together, and came to the wedding feast: and Tobias blessed his wife.

5

And Tobit his father made his count every day: and when the days of the journey were expired, and they came not, he said, Is he perchance detained? or is Gabael perchance dead, and there is no man to give him the money? And he was sorely grieved. But his wife said unto him, The child hath perished, seeing he tarrieth long; and she began to bewail him, and said, I care for nothing, my child, since I have let thee go, the light of mine eyes. And Tobit saith unto her, Hold thy peace, take no care; he is in good health. And she said unto him, Hold thy peace, deceive me not; my child hath perished. And she went out every day into the way by which they went, and did eat no bread in the daytime, and ceased not whole nights to bewail her son Tobias, until the fourteen days of the wedding feast were expired, which Raguel had sworn that he should spend there.

But Tobias said unto Raguel, Send me away, for my father and my mother look no more to see me. But his father in law said unto him, Abide with me, and I will send to thy father, and they shall declare unto him how things go with thee. And Tobias saith, No; but send me away to my father. But Raguel arose, and gave him Sarah his wife, and half his goods, servants and cattle and money; and he blessed them, and sent them away, saying, The God of heaven shall prosper you, my children, before I die. And he said to his daughter, Honour thy father and thy mother in law; they are now thy parents; let me hear a good report of thee. And he kissed her. And Edna said to Tobias, The Lord of heaven restore thee, dear brother, and grant to me that I may see thy children of my daughter Sarah, that I may rejoice before the Lord: and, behold, I commit my daughter unto thee in special trust: vex her not.

After these things Tobias also went his way, blessing God because he had prospered his journey; and he blessed Raguel and Edna his wife. And he went on his way till they drew near unto Nineveh. And Raphael said to Tobias, Knowest thou not, brother, how thou didst leave thy father? Let us run forward before thy wife, and prepare the house. But take in thy hand the gall of the fish. And they went their way, and the dog went after them. And Anna sat looking about toward the way for her son. And she espied him coming, and said to his father, Behold, thy son cometh, and the man that went with him. And Raphael said, I know, Tobias, that thy father will open his eyes. Do thou therefore anoint his eyes with the gall, and being pricked therewith, he shall rub, and shall make the white films to fall away, and he shall see thee.

And Anna ran unto him, and fell upon the neck of her son, and said unto him, I have seen thee, my child; from henceforth I will die. And they wept both. And Tobit went forth toward the door, and stumbled: but his son ran unto him, and took hold of his father: and he strake the gall on his father's eyes, saying, Be of good cheer, my father. But when his eyes began to smart, he rubbed them; and the white films scaled away from the corners of his eyes; and he saw his son, and fell upon his neck. And he wept, and said, Blessed art thou, O God, and blessed is thy name for ever, and blessed are all thy holy angels; for thou didst scourge, and didst have mercy on me: behold, I see my son Tobias. And his son went in rejoicing, and told his father the great things that had happened to him in Media.

And Tobit went out to meet his daughter in law at the gate of Nineveh, rejoicing, and blessing God: and they which saw him go marvelled, because he had received his sight. And Tobit gave thanks before them, because God had shewed mercy on him. And when Tobit came near to Sarah his daughter in law, he blessed her, saying, Welcome, daughter: blessed is God which hath brought thee unto us, and blessed are thy father and thy mother. And there was joy to all his brethren which were at Nineveh. And Achiacharus, and Nasbas his brother's son, came: and Tobias' wedding feast was kept seven days with great gladness.

And Tobit called his son Tobias, and said unto him, See, my child, that the man which went with thee have his wages, and thou must give him more. And he said unto him, Father, it is no harm to me to give him the half of those things which I have brought: for he hath led me for thee in safety, and he cured my wife, and brought my money, and likewise cured thee. And the old man said, It is due unto him. And he called the angel, and said unto him, Take the half of all that ye have brought. Then he called them both privily, and said unto them:

"Bless God, and give him thanks, and magnify him, and give him thanks in the sight of all that live, for the things which he hath done with you. It is good to bless God and exalt his name, shewing forth with honour the works of God; and be not slack to give him thanks. It is good to keep close the secret of a king, but to reveal gloriously the works of God. Do good, and evil shall not find you. Good is prayer with fasting and alms and righteousness. A little with righteousness is better than much with unrighteousness. It is better to give alms than to lay up gold: alms doth deliver from death, and it shall purge away all sin. They that do alms and righteousness shall be filled with life; but they that sin are enemies to their own life.

"Surely I will keep close nothing from you. I have said, It is good to keep close the secret of a king, but to reveal gloriously the works of God. And now, when thou didst pray, and Sarah thy daughter in law, I did bring the memorial of your prayer before the Holy One: and when thou didst bury the dead, I was with thee likewise. And when thou didst not delay to rise up, and leave thy dinner, that thou mightest go and cover the dead, thy good deed was not hid from me: but I was with thee. And now God did send me to heal thee and Sarah thy daughter in law. I AM RAPHAEL, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and go in before the glory of the Holy One."

And they were both troubled, and fell upon their faces; for they were afraid. And he said unto them, Be not afraid, ye shall have peace; but bless God for ever. For not of any favour of mine, but by the will of your God I came; wherefore bless him for ever. All these days did I appear unto you; and I did neither eat nor drink, but ye saw a vision. And now give God thanks: because I ascend to him that sent me: and write in a book all the things which have been done. And they rose up, and saw him no more. And they confessed the great and wonderful works of God, and how the angel of the Lord had appeared unto them.

6

And Tobit wrote a prayer for rejoicing, and said:

I

Blessed is God that liveth for ever,
    And blessed is his kingdom.
For he scourgeth, and sheweth mercy:
    He leadeth down to the grave, and bringeth up again:
    And there is none that shall escape his hand.

II

Give thanks unto him before the Gentiles, ye children of Israel:
    For he hath scattered us among them.
There declare his greatness,
    And extol him before all the living:
Because he is our Lord,
    And God is our Father for ever.
And he will scourge us for our iniquities, and will again shew mercy,
    And will gather us out of all the nations among whom ye are scattered.

If ye turn to him with your whole heart and with your whole soul,
To do truth before him,
Then will he turn unto you,
And will not hide his face from you.
And see what he will do with you,
And give him thanks with your whole mouth,
And bless the Lord of righteousness,
And exalt the everlasting King.
I in the land of my captivity give him thanks,
And shew his strength and majesty to a nation of sinners.
Turn, ye sinners, and do righteousness before him:
Who can tell if he will accept you and have mercy on you?
I exalt my God,
And my soul doth exalt the King of heaven,
And it shall rejoice in his greatness.

III

Let all men speak, and let them give him thanks in Jerusalem.
O Jerusalem, the holy city,
He will scourge thee for the works of thy sons,
And will again have mercy on the sons of the righteous.

Give thanks to the Lord with goodness,
And bless the everlasting King,
That his tabernacle may be builded in thee again with joy,
And that he may make glad in thee those that are captives,
And love in thee for ever those that are miserable.
Many nations shall come from far to the name of the Lord God
With gifts in their hands, even gifts to the King of heaven;
Generations of generations shall praise thee,
And sing songs of rejoicing.
Cursed are all they that hate thee;
Blessed shall be all they that love thee for ever.
Rejoice and be exceeding glad for the sons of the righteous:
For they shall be gathered together and shall bless the Lord of the righteous.
O blessed are they that love thee;
They shall rejoice for thy peace:
Blessed are all they that sorrowed for all thy scourges:
Because they shall rejoice for thee,
When they have seen all thy glory;
And they shall be made glad for ever.
Let my soul bless God the great King.
For Jerusalem shall be builded with sapphires and emeralds and precious stones;

Thy walls and towers and battlements with pure gold.
And the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with beryl and carbuncle and stones of Ophir.
And all her streets shall say, Hallelujah, and give praise,
Saying, Blessed is God, which hath exalted thee for ever.

7

And Tobit made an end of giving thanks. And he was eight and fifty years old when he lost his sight; and after eight years he received it again: and he gave alms, and he feared the Lord God more and more, and gave thanks unto him.

Now he grew very old; and he called his son, and the six sons of his son, and said unto him,

"My child, take thy sons: behold, I am grown old, and am ready to depart out of this life. Go into Media, my child, for I surely believe all the things which Jonah the prophet spake of Nineveh, that it shall be overthrown, but in Media there shall rather be peace for a season; and that our brethren shall be scattered in the earth from the good land; and Jerusalem shall be desolate, and the house of God in it shall be burned up, and shall be desolate for a time; and God shall again have mercy on them, and bring them back into the land, and they shall build the house, but not like to the former house, until the times of that age be fulfilled; and afterward they shall return from the places of their captivity, and build up Jerusalem with honour, and the house of God shall be built in it for ever with a glorious building, even as the prophets spake concerning it. And all the nations shall turn to fear the Lord God truly, and shall bury their idols. And all the nations shall bless the Lord, and his people shall give thanks unto God, and the Lord shall exalt his people; and all they that love the Lord God in truth and righteousness shall rejoice, shewing mercy to our brethren. And now, my child, depart from Nineveh, because those things which the prophet Jonah spake shall surely come to pass. But keep thou the law and the ordinances, and shew thyself merciful and righteous, that it may be well with thee. And bury me decently, and thy mother with me; and dwell ye no longer at Nineveh. See, my child, what Aman did to Achiacharus that nourished him, how out of light he brought him into darkness, and all the recompense that he made him: and Achiacharus was saved, but the other had his recompense, and he went down into darkness. Manasses gave alms, and escaped the snare of death which he set for him: but Aman fell into the snare, and perished. And now, my children, consider what alms doeth, and how righteousness doth deliver."

And while he was saying these things, he gave up the ghost in the bed; but he was a hundred and eight and fifty years old; and he buried him magnificently. And when Anna died, he buried her with his father. But Tobias departed with his wife and his sons to Ecbatana unto Raguel his father in law, and he grew old in honour, and he buried his father and mother in law magnificently, and he inherited their substance, and his father Tobit's. And he died at Ecbatana of Media, being a hundred and seven and twenty years old. And before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, which Nebuchadnezzar and Ahasuerus took captive; and before his death he rejoiced over Nineveh.

NOTES TO SOLOMON'S SONG

Metre of Solomon's Song

The metre of *Solomon's Song* will be found to be both regular and beautiful when once its principle is caught. It presents points of resemblance and difference when compared with the metres of Wisdom literature, as discussed in the volumes of this series containing *Proverbs* and *Job*.

1. The poem is in what I have called 'Antique Metre': the metre of the poetry contained in the historical books of the Bible. Its law is simple. A unit or 'strain' of Antique Metre consists of a single couplet of alternate parallelism, of which either line may be strengthened by an additional parallel line, but not both.

The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh,
    Leaping upon the mountains,
    Skipping upon the hills.

My beloved is like a roe or a young hart:
    Behold, he standeth behind our wall.

He looketh in at the windows,
He sheweth himself through the lattice.
    My beloved spake, and said unto me.

Here are three 'strains': the second is a simple couplet; the third has its first line supplemented, and the first has its second line supplemented. The analysis of Antique Metre rests entirely upon the recognition of the 'strain' as its unit; in measuring its rhythmic correspondences the estimate must be made as to number of strains, not of lines.

2. Occasionally a line may be found that is considerably longer than adjacent lines. Such a line will sometimes contain a vocative, and this is felt as a recitative expression, outside rhythm.

I have compared thee, O my love, to a steed in Pharaoh's chariots.

Or its length may measure the effort of leading off a fresh subject.

By night, on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth.

In other cases the length is made by repetitions.

Come with me from Lebanon, my bride, with me from Lebanon.
Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my bride; thou hast ravished my heart.

There is nothing in these cases to upset the rhythmic balance.

3. In Antique Metre generally a poem will be an aggregation of such strains, without further rhythmic form. [Compare the Song of Moses, and the Last Words of Moses, in the volume of this series containing *Deuteronomy.*] But *Solomon's Song* has another rhythmic characteristic — it is throughout antistrophic: a strophe of one, two, or more strains is balanced by an antistrophe of the same number.

By night, on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loveth:
I sought him, but I found him not.
I said, I will rise now, and go about the city,
In the streets and in the broad ways,
I will seek him whom my soul loveth:
I sought him, but I found him not.

The watchmen that go about the city found me:
To whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?
It was but a little that I passed from them,
When I found him whom my soul loveth:
I held him, and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him into my mother's house,
And into the chamber of her that conceived me.

A strophe of three strains is here answered by an antistrophe of the same number. The student will be careful to distinguish between the number of lines and the number of strains in the strophes. So fundamental is the idea of the strain as the unit in Antique Metre, that one strain is always felt as rhythmic counterpoise to another strain, whatever be the exact number of lines in each.

4. The antistrophic rhythm in this poem is of the continuous kind, so familiar in Greek literature, where each strophe is immediately followed by its antistrophe — *aa' bb' cc'*. There is a single case of antistrophic inversion in *Solomon's Song* (*ab b'a'*). It is noticeable that it occurs, not in dialogue, but at the point (in Idyl III) where the dialogue gives place to impersonal description. (Section 9.)

5. A strophe with its antistrophe is here considered to make a metrical section of the poem; and the whole is divided into such sections, numbered from one to twenty-six.

6. The divisions between the strophes and the divisions between the speeches of dialogue do not necessarily coincide; sometimes portions of successive speeches are required to make a strophe, and sometimes the division of strophe and antistrophe will come in the middle of a speech. Section 4 illustrates both points.

Strophe

THE BRIDEGROOM

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair;
Thine eyes are as doves.

THE BRIDE

Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant:
Also our couch is green.
The beams of our house are cedars,
And our rafters are firs.

Antistrophe

I am a rose of Sharon,
A lily of the valleys.

THE BRIDEGROOM

As a lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.

THE BRIDE

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood,
So is my beloved among the sons.

7. The refrains used to separate the seven idyls, or to break the longer idyls into parts, though in the same Antique Metre, are yet outside the antistrophic system, — a confirmation of the parenthetic character I have claimed for them. (See Introduction, page x.)

8. There is one break in the antistrophic completeness, and this is highly interesting. It occurs in Idyl V. The idyl covers four sections (17–20); of these the first and the last two have the regular strophe and antistrophe, each of three strains. Section 18 has a strophe of three strains, but the place of the antistrophe is taken by an irregular succession of strains. But when this irregular mass is examined, it is found to be the quasi-dramatic reminiscence which is projected into the midst of the meditation on the bride that occupies the idyl as a whole. (See Introduction, pages xv–xvii.) Thus the break in the regularity of the rhythm is the outward and visible sign of a break in the order of the thought. [Compare the *Job* volume, note to section 20, where it is shown that interruptions of the dialogue are reflected in interruptions of the metre.]

The metre of each section is analysed as follows.

1. Strophes of two strains each. The metre is so broken by the dialogue that it may be worth while to print the lines continuously:

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth:
For thy love is better than wine;
Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance;
Thy name is as ointment poured forth:
Therefore do the virgins love thee.

Draw me — we will run after thee.
The king hath brought me into his chambers.
We will be glad and rejoice in thee,
We will make mention of thy love more than of wine.
In uprightness do they love thee.

2. Strophes of three strains each. 3. Strophes of two strains each. 4. Strophes of three strains: the antistrophe commences at the words *I am a rose*, etc. 5. Strophes of two strains. 6. Strophes of four strains. 7. Strophes of two strains: the antistrophe takes in the interrupting voices of the Brothers. 8. Strophes of three strains. 9. Antistrophic inversion: *2, 3; 3, 2* (strains, of course, not lines). 10. Strophes of four strains. 11. Strophes of three strains. 12. Strophes of five strains: the antistrophe takes in the poet's apostrophe to the lovers. 13, 14. Strophes of three strains. 15. Strophes of four strains. It is worth noting that the change in the spirit of the dream, from trouble to happy thoughts, is accompanied by a change in the metre, from triple strains (sections 13, 14) to quadruple and double strains (sections 15, 16). 17–20. All the strophes have triple strains, except the antistrophe to 18 which, as noted above (page 123), is a break in the meditation marked by a break in the rhythm. The lines of this

antistrophe make up six strains, but there is no antistrophic effect. 21, 22. Strophes of two strains. 23. Strophes of one strain each: the first being a fragment of impersonal description. 24. Strophes of five strains. 25, 26. All the strophes are of two strains each.

TITLE

The title here adopted is that of the Revised Version: *The Song of Songs which is Solomon's.* This is a literal translation of the title in the Vulgate. In the Septuagint it stands: *The Song of Songs which is Solomon.* However it be read, there is no need to interpret it as implying that Solomon is the author; in the usage of Scripture titles the words might equally refer to the fact that he is the hero of the poem. It is a tempting interpretation to understand *Song of Songs* as equivalent to *liederkräntz:* but the phrase is probably a translation of the title in the Hebrew version: *The most lovely Song of Solomon.*

Page 9. *I have compared thee, O my love, to a steed, etc.* See Introduction, page xxii.

Page 16. *Be thou like a roe, etc.* For this symbol, see Introduction, page xx.

Page 21. *The midst thereof being inlaid with love from the daughters of Jerusalem.* The meaning of this obscure phrase is probably love gifts, draperies worked by the women.

Page 22. *Thy hair is as a flock of goats.* For this and the following symbols, see the Introduction, pages xxii, xxiii.

Page 24. *A garden shut up is my sister, etc.* Solomon uses this symbol of maidenhood in making his formal proposal of marriage, and the Shulammite keeps it up in her reply.

Page 25. *Eat, O friends.* Here the poet apostrophises his hero and heroine. See Introduction, page xiii.

Page 30. *His head is as the most fine gold.* For this and the expressions that follow, see Introduction, pages xx, xxi.

Page 35. *Terrible as an army with banners.* A symbol expressing the awe which supreme beauty will create in the beholder. It is one of the many symptoms of the purity of the love celebrated in this poem.

Page 36. *Who is she that looketh forth.* For the whole of this important passage, see Introduction, pages xv–xvii.

Page 37. *Thine eyes as the pools in Heshbon.* For all the symbols of this passage, see Introduction, page xxi.

Page 45. *Under the apple tree I awakened thee.* The reference is to the royal party coming by surprise upon the maiden, who supposed herself alone in her own family vineyard, as brought out in Idyl V. *Awakened* need not be taken literally: it may mean, startled out of her reverie.

Page 46. *We have a little sister, etc.* The Shulammite is quoting words of her brothers spoken in her hearing when she was a child and unable to comprehend the *double entendre.* *Wall* is a symbol for chastity, as contrasted with *door* for facility or incontinence. She has lived now to understand what it all means. It is hardly necessary to point out how natural such reminiscence is to the occasion,—the visit of a bride to home scenes with her husband.

Page 46. *Solomon had a vineyard, etc.* This is a quaint and beautiful figure in which the Shulammite expresses, amid the home surroundings, her loving surrender of herself to her royal husband. Solomon had been the 'landlord'—to use modern phraseology—of her ancestral vineyard, whereas her own family had simply been the vinedressers who rented it from him; Solomon had taken the thousand pieces of silver, where her brothers had only had the labourers' two hundred. So, she says, Solomon is the real owner of her heart; her family's share is like the mere labourer's pittance.

NOTES ON RUTH

Page 52. *Intreat me not to leave thee, etc.* It will be readily understood that where a language founds its verse system upon parallelism of thought and phrase the line between prose and verse may be often difficult to draw. In a prose narrative impassioned thought will easily rise into the parallelism of verse. There are three passages of *Ruth* which raise the question whether they should be presented in the one form or the other. The musical entreaty of *Ruth* seems certainly verse; it has caught the ears of readers of many generations, and come down as a formula of faithful attachment. The other passages are more doubtful. One is a Marriage Blessing:

The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house, etc.

This might be expected to be verse; and it will just go into the loose form of Antique Metre: but several lines are very prosaic. The next is the felicitation on the babe's birth addressed to Naomi: as to which the same remark may be made.

Page 57. *It is true that I am a near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.* The legal custom underlying the story seems to be an extension of what appears in the Mosaic law. This imposes on the deceased husband's brother the duty of raising up seed to the dead (*Genesis*, chapter xxxviii; *Deuteronomy*, chapter xxv. 5). The story of Ruth implies that the obligation extended, failing a husband's brother, to whoever was nearest of kin.

Page 58. *And the near kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance.* Boaz had first called upon the kinsman to buy the estate of the deceased Elimelech from Naomi. Now Naomi was an old woman past hope of children, as she herself said to her daughters in law; hence the kinsman was willing to do this much, which would only involve an expenditure of money on his part, in return for which he would have the land. But when he is reminded that Elimelech's son has left a widow, a young woman to whom it would be his duty to raise up seed, the affair wears a different look: he would then be buying the land for Ruth's children, not for his own family, and he declines.

NOTES TO ESTHER

Apocryphal Additions to Esther

The Septuagint contains several passages which are not in the original Hebrew; additions, or in one case an amplification. These are on the face of them interpolations, carrying no authority. They have, however, a certain interest of their own; and they are worth noting for another reason: the way they have been dealt with in early translations, including the Authorised Version, shows how indifferent early translators were to the literary continuity of what they translated. I take the following clear account of the matter from Smith's Bible Dictionary.

> *When Jerome translated the Book of Esther, he first gave the Version of the Hebrew only as being alone authentic. He then added at the end a Version in Latin of those several passages which he found in the LXX, and which were not in the Hebrew, stating where each passage came in, and marking them all with an obelus. The first passage so given is that which forms the continuation of chapter x (which of course immediately precedes it), ending with the above entry about Dositheus. Having annexed this conclusion, he then gives the* Prooemium, *which he says forms the beginning of the Greek Vulgate, beginning with what is now v. 2 of chapter xi; and so proceeds with the other passages. But in subsequent editions all Jerome's explanatory matter has been swept*

> *away, and the disjointed portions have been printed as chapters xi, xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, as if they formed a narrative in continuation of the Canonical Book. The extreme absurdity of this arrangement is nowhere more apparent than in chapter xi, where the verse (1) which closes the whole Book in the Greek copies, and in St. Jerome's Latin translation, is actually made immediately to precede that (v. 2) which is the very first verse of the* Prooemium.

Another of the absurd results is that in chapter x Mordecai explains a dream, which dream we do not hear until chapter xi. The Revised Version of the Apocrypha has given the passages separately, with indications as to the place of each in the Greek original. What is interesting in these interpolations is given in the notes that here follow.

Page 70. *In those days, when Mordecai sat in the king's gate, etc.* In the interpolations of the Greek version Mordecai's discovery of the conspiracy is connected with a dream, which is thus related.

> *Behold, noise and tumult, thunderings and earthquake, and uproar upon the earth: and, behold, two great dragons came forth, both of them ready to fight, and their cry was great. And at their cry all nations were ready to battle, that they might fight against the righteous nation. And, lo, a day of darkness and gloominess, tribulation and anguish, affliction and great uproar upon the earth. And the whole righteous nation was troubled, fearing the evils that should befall them, and were ready to perish. Then they cried*

> *unto God, and upon their cry, as it were from a little fountain, there came a great river, even much water. The light and the sun rose up, and the lowly were exalted, and devoured the glorious.*

The narrative goes on to say that Mordecai pondered over the interpretation of this dream, "and until night by all means was desirous to know it"; that he took his rest in the court with the two eunuchs who were the keepers of the court, heard their communings, and gave information. The eunuchs were executed, and Mordecai commanded "to serve in the court"; but the execution of these eunuchs brought Mordecai into enmity with the powerful Haman.

When the whole story reaches its end, one of the interpolated passages makes Mordecai find the interpretation of his dream.

> *As for the little fountain that became a river, and there was light, and the sun, and much water, the river is Esther, whom the king married, and made queen: and the two dragons are I and Aman: and the nations are those that were assembled to destroy the name of the Jews: and my nation, this is Israel, which cried to God, and were saved: for the Lord hath saved his people, and the Lord hath delivered us from all these evils, and God hath wrought signs and great wonders, which have not been done among the nations.*

Page 71. *They cast Pur, that is, the lot, before Haman.* This is an artistic touch in the construction of the narrative which should not be overlooked. Haman is a fatalist; and this makes the swinging round of destiny against him more emphatic. (Compare below, note to page 78.)

Page 72. *And letters were sent by posts, etc.* The Greek version purports to give the letter: a rhetorical expansion of the situation, of which the chief features are the description of the Jews as a nation "alone continually in opposition unto all men, following perversely a life which is strange to our laws"; and again a reference to Haman in the words: "who is ordained over the affairs, and is a second father unto us."

Page 74. *Now it came to pass on the third day, that Esther put on her royal apparel. . . . So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre.* The few sentences which stand thus in the Hebrew are in the Greek amplified into an elaborate description of several paragraphs. First the prayer of Mordecai is given at length; in which, amongst other things, he is made to say:

> *Thou knowest, Lord, that it was neither in contempt nor pride, nor for any desire of glory, that I did not bow down to proud Aman. For I could have been content with good will for the salvation of Israel to kiss the soles of his feet. But I did this, that I might not prefer the glory of man above the glory of God: neither will I bow down unto any but to thee, which art my Lord.*

Then the mourning of Esther is elaborately described; and her prayer is given at length. She speaks of herself as abhorring the bed of the uncircumcised, and the sign of her high estate, which has come to her as a 'necessity.' Lastly we have a minute account of the critical moment.

And being majestically adorned, after she had called upon the all-seeing God and saviour, she took her two maids with her: and upon the one she leaned, as carrying herself delicately; and the other followed, bearing up her train. And she was ruddy through the perfection of her beauty, and her countenance was cheerful and right amiable: but her heart was in anguish for fear. Then having passed through all the doors, she stood before the king, who sat upon his royal throne, and was clothed with all his robes of majesty, all glittering with gold and precious stones; and he was very dreadful. Then lifting up his countenance that was flushed with glory, he looked upon her in fierce anger: and the queen fell down, and turned pale, and fainted, and she bowed herself upon the head of the maid that went before. Then God changed the spirit of the king into mildness, who in an agony leaped from his throne, and took her in his arms, till she came to herself again, and comforted her with soothing words, and said unto her, Esther, what is the matter? I am thy brother, be of good cheer: thou shalt not die, for our commandment is for our subjects: come near. So he held up his golden sceptre, and laid it upon her neck, and embraced her, and said, Speak unto me. Then said she unto him, I saw thee, my lord, as an angel of God, and my heart was troubled for fear of thy glory. For wonderful art thou, my lord, and thy countenance is full of grace. And as she was speaking, she fell down for faintness. Then the king was troubled, and all his servants comforted her.

The narrative of the Hebrew version is then continued: how the king enquired as to Esther's petition and request.

Page 78. *If Mordecai, before whom thou hast begun to fall, be of the seed of the Jews, etc.* This is evidently a touch of fatalism. The family council cannot help being struck with the circumstance that the man through whom Haman has just been humiliated is one of those he had plotted to destroy by massacre; here is the finger of Nemesis. Haman's superstition in casting lots for a lucky day for the massacre has been already pointed out.

Page 81. *A copy of the writing . . . was published.* The Septuagint again offers the letter at full length. One of its sentences may be quoted:

> *For by these means he thought, finding us destitute of friends, to have translated the kingdom of the Persians to the Macedonians. But we find that the Jews, whom this most ungracious wretch hath delivered to utter destruction, are no evil-doers, but live by most just laws: and that they be children of the most high and most mighty living God, who hath ordered the kingdom both unto us and to our progenitors in the most excellent manner.*

It may be remarked that such interpolated speeches must not be considered in the light of forgeries; they simply illustrate the convention of ancient history by which the historian would bring out the situation of affairs in the form of an imaginary speech put into the mouth of a personage of the history.

NOTES ON TOBIT

TITLE PAGE

The first verses of the book seem to make an elaborate title page; for which compare the elaborate titles of *Proverbs* and *Deuteronomy*.

The *Book of Tobit* resembles *Ecclesiasticus* in the fact that the Hebrew original has not survived, and the translation of our English versions is made from the Septuagint. The Hebrew versions that exist are late, and of no critical weight.

Page 89. *And when I was in mine own country, etc.* The long sentence commencing with these words I have made by altering the punctuation of the R. V. By removing the full stops which in that version are made to separate coordinate sentences, it is possible to save the historic probability of the text. As it stands in the R. V., Tobit is made to assert that the falling away of Naphtali from the worship of Jerusalem took place when he was a young man: this would make him more than two centuries old when carried into captivity. What is obviously meant is that when he was a young man he alone went to Jerusalem to the feasts; the explanation about the falling away of the tribe being introduced to explain why this was significant. The sentence as thus punctuated is regular, if somewhat long; the temporal sentence, *When I was young*, has for its principal sentence, *all the tribe of Naphtali . . . fell* *away, and all the tribes which fell away together sacrificed to the heifer Baal, and I alone went often, etc.* There is nothing in this punctuation to conflict with the Greek text.

Page 92. *Where are thine alms and thy righteous deeds?* The insinuation is, his calamity has revealed that all his piety was hypocritical.

Page 96. *Pour out thy bread on the burial of the just.* Two explanations are offered of this expression. One is that it refers to the custom of carrying food to a house of mourning, in behalf of the mourners who would be unable, as unclean, to visit their homes. The other assumes the custom of putting food on the tomb, though for the poor and not for the dead. The custom, whatever it was, is noted also in *Jeremiah* (chapter xvi. 7):

> *Neither shall men break bread for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead.*

Page 99. *A fish leaped out of the river, and would have swallowed up the young man.* The Chaldaic version puts the matter differently — that the fish threatened to eat Tobias's bread.

Page 100. *Raguel may in no wise marry her to another according to the law of Moses, or else he shall be liable to death.* No law of Moses is known as bearing on the case, except that of *Numbers*, chapter xxxvi. 6–9, which simply prescribes the marriage of a daughter heiress within her tribe; nor is there any death penalty attached.

Page 103. *But when the devil smelled the smell, he fled into* *the uppermost parts of Egypt, and the angel bound him.* The commentators seem to assume that it was by an evil smell that the fiend was driven away; and Bissell wonders that Tobias and his bride were not driven away likewise. But I doubt if this is the meaning. In oriental superstition it is the good and fragrant perfumes that drive away the evil spirits, with whose natures they are incompatible. Southey makes use of this idea in his *Thalaba* (vi. 22), speaking of such perfumes—

As Peris to their Sister bear,
When from the summit of some lofty tree
She hangs encaged, the captive of the Dives,
They from their pinions shake
The sweetness of celestial flowers,
And, as her enemies impure
From that impervious poison far away
Fly groaning with the torment, she the while
Inhales her fragrant food.

In support of this, Southey quotes a note of D'Herbelot on a similar detail of the *Caherman Nameh.*

> *The Dives could not bear the perfumes, which rendered them gloomy and melancholy whenever they drew near the cage in which a Peri was suspended.*

A similar idea underlies the incidents of the Miracle Plays in which devils are driven off by rose petals cast by the hands of Faith, Hope, and Charity. So the fish's heart on the ashes of incense may have emitted a delicious perfume, from which the evil fiend shrank. In Milton's well known reference to this passage of *Tobit* there is a curious ambiguity, so that we cannot tell whether he understood a savoury perfume or the opposite.

> *So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend*
> *Who came their bane, though with them better pleas'd*
> *Than Asmodeus with the fishy fume*
> *That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse*
> *Of Tobit's son, and with a vengeance sent*
> *From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.*
> *Paradise Lost*, iv. 166.

Better pleas'd may mean that the other was the reverse of *pleas'd;* or, if the smell of the fish be a fragrant smell, then that the fragrance of Paradise surpassed it.

INDEX

OR

REFERENCE TABLE

REFERENCE TABLE

To connect the Numbering in the Present Edition with the Chapters and Verses of the Bible and Apocrypha

SOLOMON'S SONG	*Chap.*	*Verse*	*Page*
Idyl I	I	2	7
	II	1	10
Idyl II		8	15
	III	1	17
Idyl III		6	21
	IV	1	22
	V	1	25
Idyl IV		2	29
	VI	1	31
Idyl V		4	35
	VII	1	37
Idyl VI		11	41
	VIII	1	41
Idyl VII		5	45
RUTH			
1	I	1	51
2	II	1	53
	III	1	56
3	IV	1	58
ESTHER			
1	I	1	65
	II	1	67
2	III	1	70

ESTHER (*cont.*)	*Chap.*	*Verse*	*Page*
3	IV	1	73
	V	1	74
4	VI	1	76
5	VII	1	78
6	VIII	1	79
	IX	1	82
7		17	84
	X	1	85
TOBIT			
Title page	I	1	87
1		3	89
2	II	1	91
	III	1	92
3	IV	1	95
	V	1	97
4	VI	1	99
	VII	1	101
	VIII	1	103
	IX	1	105
5	X	1	105
	XI	1	106
	XII	1	108
6	XIII	1	110
7	XIV	1	113

Small 18mo. Cloth extra, 50 cents each; Leather, 60 cents.

The Modern Reader's Bible.

A Series of Books from the Sacred Scriptures, presented in Modern Literary Form,

BY

RICHARD G. MOULTON,

M.A. (Camb.), Ph.D. (Penn.),

Professor of Literature in English in the University of Chicago.

PRESS COMMENTS.

"The effect of these changes back to the original forms under which the sacred writings first appeared will be, for the vast majority of readers, a surprise and delight; they will feel as if they had come upon new spiritual and intellectual treasures, and they will appreciate for the first time how much the Bible has suffered from the hands of those who have treated it without reference to its literary quality. In view of the significance and possible results of Professor Moulton's undertaking, it is not too much to pronounce it one of the most important spiritual and literary events of the times. It is part of the renaissance of Biblical study; but it may mean, and in our judgment it does mean, the renewal of a fresh and deep impression of the beauty and power of the supreme spiritual writing of the world."

The Outlook,
New York.

"Unquestionably here is a task worth carrying out: and it is to be said at once that Dr. Moulton has carried it out with great skill and helpfulness. Both the introduction and the notes are distinct contributions to the better understanding and higher appreciation of the literary character, features, and beauties of the Biblical books treated."

Presbyterian
and Reformed
Review.

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY,

66 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

The order in which it is proposed to issue the volumes is as follows:

WISDOM SERIES

IN FOUR VOLUMES

THE PROVERBS

A Miscellany of Sayings and Poems embodying Isolated Observations of Life. *Ready*

ECCLESIASTICUS

A Miscellany including longer compositions, still embodying only Isolated Observations of Life. *Ready*

ECCLESIASTES — WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Each is a Series of Connected Writings embodying, from different standpoints, a Solution of the Whole Mystery of Life. *Ready*

THE BOOK OF JOB

A Dramatic Poem in which are embodied Varying Solutions of the Mystery of Life. *Ready*

DEUTERONOMY

The Orations and Songs of Moses, constituting his Farewell to the People of Israel. *Ready*

BIBLICAL IDYLS

The Lyric Idyl of Solomon's Song, and the Epic Idyls of Ruth, Esther, and Tobit. *Ready*

HISTORY SERIES

IN FIVE VOLUMES

GENESIS

Bible History, Part I: Formation of the Chosen Nation. *Ready*

THE EXODUS

Bible History, Part II: Migration of the Chosen Nation to the Land of Promise. — Book of Exodus, with Leviticus and Numbers. *Ready*

THE JUDGES

Bible History, Part III: The Chosen Nation in its Efforts towards Secular Government. — Books of Joshua, Judges, I Samuel. *Ready*

THE KINGS

Bible History, Part IV: The Chosen Nation under a Secular Government side by side with a Theocracy. — Books of II Samuel, I and II Kings. *Ready*

THE CHRONICLES

Ecclesiastical History of the Chosen Nation. — Books of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah.

PROPHECY SERIES

IN FOUR VOLUMES

ISAIAH **EZEKIEL**
JEREMIAH **THE MINOR PROPHETS**

Announcements as to further issues will be made from time to time. Send fifty cents for a copy of any volume now ready, and give it a careful examination. Its convenient size and exceptionally attractive form will lead you to subscribe for the entire series.

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY,
66 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK.

THE MODERN READER'S BIBLE.

EDITED BY

DR. RICHARD G. MOULTON,

University of Chicago.

Single volumes, cloth, 50 cents each; leather, 60 cents each.

Rev. Dr. LYMAN ABBOTT, Editor-in-Chief of the OUTLOOK, writes:—

"I had intended to write to Professor Moulton, congratulating him on this work. It may almost be said that he has inaugurated a new epoch in Bible study. The scholars have been telling us for some years that the Bible is literature. Particular passages of beauty in it have been pointed out, and some single books, such as Job and the Song of Songs, have been put in literary form and given a literary interpretation by special writers. But Professor Moulton is the first one, so far as I know, to deal with the whole Bible as a collection of literature, to discriminate between literary study and historico-critical study, and to present the results of the former in such a form as to render them available to the ordinary English reader. The low price of the little volumes puts them within the reach of the great majority of American households, and I look for a large increase of interest in the Bible, for a much better understanding of its general spirit and teaching, and especially for an increased appreciation of its inspirational power, from the publication of the Modern Reader's Bible."

PRESS NOTICES.

THE MODERN READER'S BIBLE

The world has waited over long for this treatment of the Scriptures. . . . The books gathered into the Old Testament constitute by far the most important part of the Bible (from a literary point of view), and they make up a body of work whose breadth and depth and height are hardly rivalled, certainly not surpassed, in the whole world-literature. . . . The purpose of Dr. Moulton's series is just this exposition of the strictly literary value of the Scriptures. . . . His book has the definite aim of supplying what the common editions of the Bible do not furnish.

Godey's Magazine.

THE WISDOM SERIES

This first volume is ample evidence that the whole series will prove of capital importance. Professor Moulton's Introduction discusses the Wisdom Literature, the principles underlying it, the progress of thought found in the four works, Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, Ecclesiastes, and Wisdom of Solomon, which will form the first series of the Modern Reader's Bible, and then proceeds to an admirable introductory study of the first of the series.

The Evangelist, New York.

"The Wisdom Series" does not treat the points of the text critically, but in a literary way, to bring out the larger and deeper meanings. They are printed so as to show the poetical forms that are more characteristic of modern poetry.

Methodist Magazine and Review.

PROVERBS

New York Observer.

A suggestive and valuable arrangement of the Book of Proverbs. . . . As the Proverbs have looked out upon us from these pages, they have seemed to take on new force and point.

ECCLESIASTICUS

The student of the Bible will take great pleasure in the study of this little volume, and it will reward him richly. . . . The book deals principally with the applications of ethical ideas to conduct. There is an essay on duties to parents, others on duties to the poor, and one on the general duties of a householder, including observances of religion, charity, and social intercourse.

The Christian Advocate.

ECCLESIASTES AND THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

This suggestive little book cannot be perused without interest and profit. As an appreciation of the two writings with which it deals, it is simply admirable; the aim of the editor . . . has been rarely well achieved. By all means let this little book be read, and also the companion volumes. The "History" and "Prophecy" series will be greeted with a special welcome by many. It may be added that these brief manuals, besides being exceedingly tasteful in appearance, are very convenient in size, and are supplied with ample indices.

The Presbyterian Review.

DEUTERONOMY

His Introduction is an explanation and appreciation, not a criticism; and certainly no one, after reading it, can fail to share the editor's enthusiasm for the high literary quality of these farewell orations of Moses. The usefulness and value of this series is well shown in the skilful editing and helpful presentation of this particular book.

The Congregationalist, Boston.

THE BOOK OF JOB

"The Introductory Essay is delightfully illuminating and suggestive, and the notes are sagacious and learned. No one can fail to derive a new sense of the dignity, profundity, and symmetry of this wonderful poem from the critical treatment here applied to it."

The Watchman,
Boston.

"It is the best edition we have seen of perhaps the greatest poem in all literature, which should be read and reread as a whole, with the editor's help and guidance. It is of the most fascinating interest."

The Congregationalist,
Boston.

BIBLICAL IDYLS: *Song of Solomon, Ruth, the Book of Esther, and the Book of Tobit.*

"A marvellous effect of literary form has been produced by the recent serial edition of Biblical Idyls and Apocryphal Poems edited by PROFESSOR MOULTON, of Chicago University. One sees, as few other books have given him an opportunity to see, how much the beauty and charm of any literary work may be lost or marred by its typographical arrangement. Imagine what Tennyson or Shakespeare would be were they transposed into unlined prose, separated into arbitrary paragraphs, called verses, and numbered, and one can see how much has been lost by those who know the Bible only in the antiquated costume fashioned four centuries ago.

"Those to whom literary form makes no appeal will, of course, look upon this new departure with scant justice; but the number of students, ever increasingly large, and of cultivated readers who will gain a new delight from this *Modern Reader's Bible* ought to make the attempt a triumphant success in many ways, both tangible and otherwise."

The World,
New York.